Stories of The Land of Evangeline

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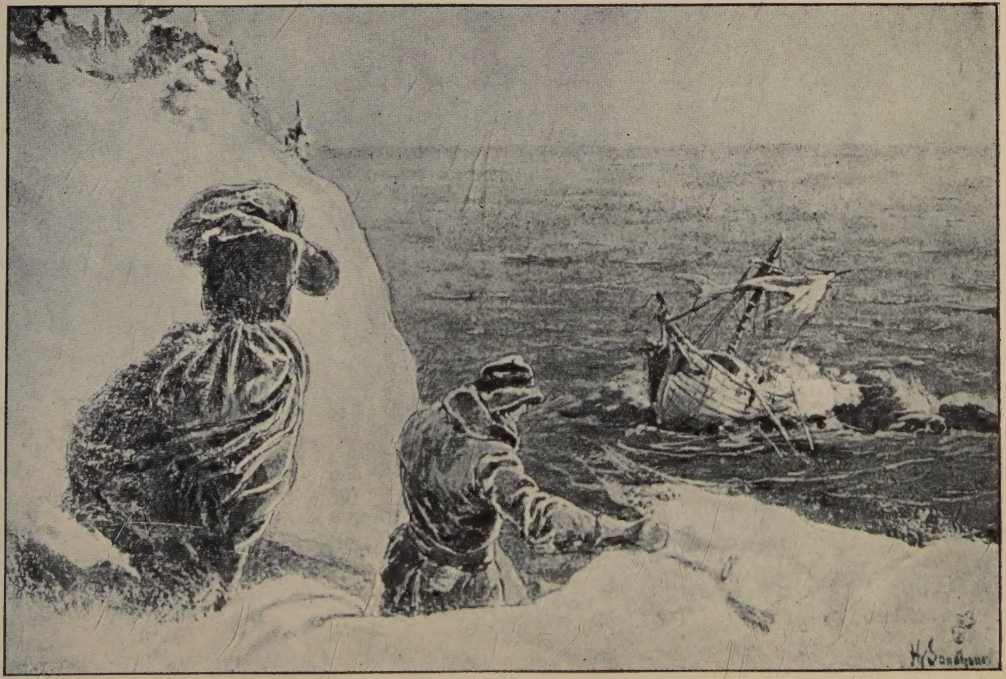

DOWN THE BLUFF.

STORIES OF THE LAND OF EVANGELINE

BY

GRACE DEAN McLEOD

"This is my own, my native land."

ILLUSTRATED

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TO THE LOVING MEMORY

OF

WILLIAM THOMAS WATERMAN

AND

JAMES BENNETT McLEOD

MY GRANDFATHERS

LONG DEAD, BUT ALIVE EVER IN MY HEART
I DEDICATE THESE TALES OF OLD ACADIE

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I.

THE HUNCHBACK OF PORT ROYAL.

MAY 20, 1690.

Flood-tide at Port Royal. Sundown on the rippling water of the tree-rimmed Basin. Golden flashes on the tree-topped mountain. Crimson tints across the clouds. Dusky shadows in the Valley. Genial warmth in the air, and vital forces everywhere.

Mindful of all this vernal energy and newness of life, and taking the wholesome air in deep-drawn respirations was a broad-breasted tall man, walking leisurely along the crooked path that led from the Settlement up Lequille River, to Port Royal. He was keen-eyed, firm-faced, and compact of build — a French Catholic priest, at this time the curé of Port Royal, and

known throughout the Settlements as Father Petete.

The soft evening air and quiet rural loveliness of the scene had relaxed the tension of his usually hard features. His errand to Port Royal was a message of good tidings to the governor; it needed no haste, and the whole aspect of the man was indolent as the slowly growing leaves which bordered his pathway along the banks of the sinuous stream.

Suddenly there came upon this peaceful scene a sound which seemed to rush out of the sky, and reverberating with multiplied echoes from the surrounding hills, fell like a thunderbolt on the ears of the musing priest.

He started, and listened intently for minutes, then hurriedly retraced his steps around one of the flexures of the path till a view of the Basin could be had.

"It is surely the Bœte,"* he muttered. "Surely! but why?"

* A short cannon placed at the entrance to the Basin, and used as a signal gun.

The Basin was clear of a sail, far as his eye could reach. He turned again, and hastened over the distance that still lay between him and the town.

Sunset had given place to twilight, twilight to moonlight, when he started to return from Port Royal. His steps were no longer slow, his face neither peaceful nor calm; and he paused often and stood with his face turned to the distant Basin, listening intently. But the report of the early evening was not repeated, nor were there other unusual sounds to break the midnight stillness.

His own house was at the farther end of the Settlement, and as he neared it he quickened his steps, for on the rough slab of slate that formed the doorstep was seated a queer misshapen little figure. The priest's look of anxiety changed for a moment to one of pity and love, as he stood over the sleeping boy.

He was a curious, malformed being. The small, well-made head set so low on the body

that the hump on the back rose above it, and stood out behind the forward-crowded shoulders. Much of the deformity of the body was hidden by a loose blue blouse, and wide trousers of the same material covered the bent and shrunken legs. The feet, resting on the gray doorstone, were bare and brown.

The priest laid his hand on the boy's head. He waked instantly, and rose to his feet, and the priest sat down upon the doorstone beside him.

"Why would you be so late?" asked the boy. "And the noise — what did it mean? it was the Bœte."

"Your ears are sharp as your wits, Claude," said the priest. "You have heard the Bœte but once before, why should you remember it?"

"Once is enough," replied the boy. "Why did it sound? — But you are hungry, Father Petete," he added, and stepping up over the door-sill into the house, he soon returned with

a bowl of milk, and a plate containing a slice of corn bread.

"Sit down," said the priest, as he received the proffered food.

"I have been sitting," replied the boy, and with both hands resting upon his hips he stood waiting, while the priest broke his long fast.

"Why did it sound?" he asked again, when he had placed the emptied bowl and plate inside the porch. "Is it an enemy?"

"It is an enemy," answered the priest.

"Tell me!" said the boy eagerly.

"There is little to tell yet," replied the priest, — "much to be done, I fear. As I turned the Horseshoe Curve on my way down the river, I heard the Bœte, and knew its import. At Port Royal there was much excitement; the men were crowded around the guard house, and the governor and De Gautiens were talking with them. But one soldier, and a habitant, were down at the signal point, and soon as they fired the mortar they set out in a canoe for the Fort.

We could watch them coming up, but it was an hour of midnight before they reached us. A frigate, two sloops, and four ketches are outside the Basin; they are British, and the Fort will be attacked."

"And fighting?" asked the boy.

"Little fighting, I fear," replied the Father. "We are in a poor condition to fight. There are but eighty-six men in the garrison, twenty-odd of them are ailing; and of the eighteen cannon but one is placed in battery. The fortifications are unfinished — and we are wanting in everything requisite to our defense."

"But we will not yield," said the boy, stiffening his bent little body. "We will fight first! Why — but no, I could not do anything, a hunchback — oh! how I hate the man who made me one. Why did he not step on me and finish killing me when he had done this much? I used to think that if I could see him I would lame him, and make him like me, but that would not be revenge enough; to make him a hunch-

back when he is a man is nothing. There are things a man may do to make others respect instead of laugh at him, and maybe strength or something, to make him not care if they do laugh — but to be a boy and humpbacked! to know why people look at me! Oh! I can't tell you, but it kills, all the time, and you don't die. How I hate the man; I will kill him sometime!"

The clear brown eyes, Nature's compensation for his distorted body, flashed, and grew dark, as he walked back and forth, fast as his little warped legs were capable, over the green plot by the stone, the moonlight on his bare feet and upturned agonized face. A look of distress came over the features of the priest, but he made no reply to the vehement outburst.

"Why do you never reprove me?" asked the boy, looking over at him and dropping down upon the stone at his feet, his face quieting a little under the loving gaze of the strong man. "All the others reprove me. But it is because you do not that I love you; you are the only

comfort I have ever known, or will know. Oh! I think about it often. I know how you found me; Paul told me."

"When have you seen Paul?" asked the priest, with a scrutinizing glance at the boy. "And what has Paul told you?"

"When you were up the Ottawa for the king, I staid with Paul in his camp one day. He told me about the place where I was born, up across the Bay to Chignecto, and how the cruel man who was strong and straight himself, took me, a baby, and tossed me in the air to see how often he could catch me; and when I dropped and fell on the wet marsh he laughed and left me there. And the hurt and wet made me sick, and because I had no mother to take care of me I grew this way. Then he told me how you came, when I was three years old, and cried when you saw me, and how you took me and brought me here to the Fort, all the way in your arms, never even letting Paul rest you — oh! I know it all now, and I think about it often —

about your crying when you saw me. And since I knew that, I think a little less about the one who made me crooked and queer, but I hate just the same when I do think; I hate him! Oh! if I only knew him and where he lives. Paul does not know — he said he did not. You cried — and he laughed. Oh! how I hate him."

"Claude," said the priest, laying his hand caressingly on the boy's small head, "Claude, you must go to rest. I do not know what may happen on the morrow; the enemy is at our gates. If I am off in the morning before you wake; do not be afraid. I am needed at the garrison. The governor is not able to manage affairs, and De Gautiens is not the man to offer advice at a time like this. I will not go to sleep, I will sit here yet awhile, and think."

"But what will we do?" asked the boy.

"That is what I am going to think about," said Father Petete. "Go now, lie down, and if I do not return by night, come down the river to the big flat rock. I will meet you there

or send you word where I am and what to do."

Used to obedience, and ready always to serve or indulge unquestioned the slightest wish of the priest, the boy took up the empty bowl and plate and clambered over the doorstep.

"Stay, Claude," said the Father, reaching out his strong arm and putting it around the perverted little form. "If it should be that I do not return — I will more than likely do so — but you know you and I always plan a day ahead, and enemies and strange ships are not symbols of security. But if I do not return, you will take the casket of gold and hide it in some safe place; then go up the river to Paul; he will care for you. While I am alive, though, I will care for you myself. Now, go, Claude, and wait the events of another day. No, do not say adieu; I will see you again."

Not a word further was spoken by either. The boy went into the house, and the priest remained outside, walking back and forth the nar-

row plot until dawn lighted up the wooded path, when he set out on his way to Port Royal again.

Obedient to his command, the boy started at sunset down the path to the town, remained about the great rock until long after dark, but met neither the priest nor his messenger. Three days passed; then he learned from the habitants the cause of the Father's failure to keep his promise. The English commander, General Phipps, had anchored within half a league of the town, and sent one of his sloops to the Fort with a trumpeter on board to summon the governor to surrender. Retaining the trumpeter, Meneval sent Father Petete to the commander, with orders to refuse surrender unless accompanied by honorable terms of capitulation. These terms Phipps at first stoutly refused; but finally the diplomacy of the priest prevailed, and the following day a formal surrender by the governor was accepted, though Phipps refused to sign the papers, and urged that his word as a general was sufficient surety.

He had been but a few hours ashore however, when he saw that he had granted honorable terms to a garrison he could easily have captured had he known its helplessness, and he secretly waited a pretext for breaking his parole of surrender.

This he soon found in the act of a drunken soldier removing some stores from the guard house. Declaring that it was a breach of the terms, he allowed his soldiers to pillage the town, took from the governor and De Gautiens their swords and put them and the priest under guard as prisoners of war.

A week elapsed, and still no word came from the Father. On the evening of the seventh day the boy had walked as near the town as his strength would allow, and on his return lay wearily down upon the top of the rock to rest. Not a sound stirred the air. The white mist from the river was gathering fast and thick over the pathway, wrapping the trunks of the tall elms, hiding the tops of the slim alders, and spread-

ing like a silver silent river over the broad marshes.

Presently a step, cautious and halting, sounded on the path toward the town. Thinking it the step of the priest, the boy's first impulse was to hurry forward to meet him, but fearing on a second thought that it might be an enemy, he crouched low and waited the nearer approach.

When the dark figure emerged from the mist-shrouded pathway, he saw that it was not the Father, but a shorter, stouter man, wearing a long heavy cloak. Soon as he reached the rock, the man removed the cloak. Concealed beneath it were two iron boxes and a shovel. He had evidently visited the spot before, for he made no survey, but at once began to dig in the deep deposit of sand and mud at one side the rock; and so rapidly did he work that in a few moments he had buried both boxes deep, and replaced the surface earth.

He then stepped round to the river side and threw the shovel into the stream. In the nearer

light Claude readily recognized him as the French Secretary, De Gautiens. He had often seen him in company with the priest, and clambering down from the rock he hurriedly approached him.

The man started and clutched the boy by the shrunken shoulders.

"Why are you spying about?" he hissed as he drew him nearer. "Why, it is the Hunchback!" he muttered. "What do you here? If you tell where the money is hid I will throw you in beside the shovel!"

"Where is Father Petete?" asked the boy, ignoring both the question and the threat.

"Safe in prison," said Gautiens, "where I will be in another half-hour, unless indeed this cursed delay with you will find me missing, and then I will be at the point of a musket. Listen, Hunchback; that money is the king's money and shall not be spent by those English curs. Not a centime is my own, not a centime would I claim for my own, else would I have concealed

and carried it with me. I have not another quarter-hour to hide it elsewhere, or even dig it up. Will you swear to me that you will not tell?"

"I will promise. I need not swear," said the boy.

"No promise! that is what Phipps gave, but what was his word worth? Nay, you will swear, or by Heaven I will throw you into the river, and you would not make even so much headway as a devil-fish to get out over those slimy banks — and you are not unlike one; ha, ha!"

The boy's eyes flashed black, and he pushed himself quickly back from the man's hold. "I swear," he said, "but not for you. I swear for the sake of the priest, who is a subject of the French king, and in the name of the God who made us both. My body is crooked, but it is straighter than your mean soul. Now tell me more about the Father."

"Your pardon, boy, for my taunt," said Gautiens, and he held out his hand. "I am forced

to believe you, for my own life is in jeopardy if I outrun the time. Thirteen hundred louis-d'or lie in those boxes. If I live I will return and deliver it to the king; if it be not there when I seek it I will know where it is gone. Now for the priest. He is a prisoner, as I said before. We are to be taken to Boston and showed about as captives by these English dogs. By strategy I escaped here; by strategy I may escape again. Remember your oath, and adieu!"

The boy thrust the proffered hand aside. "Tell the Father," he said, "to send a message to me. If I can go with him as a prisoner I gladly will; if he says not, then I remain here, but tell him to send a message. And for the king's gold, Monsieur de Gautiens, I will make not so much headway to get it as a devil-fish; ha, ha!"

The Frenchman hurried away, and the boy threw himself down upon the ground and burst into bitter weeping. The long anxiety of the fortnight, the sudden intelligence that the priest

was to go away and leave him alone, and the cruel ridicule of the Frenchman, reminding him of all he would meet now that his only friend was taken from him, was too great a strain on his worn spirit. For hours he lay there.

At dawn came the message — the priest himself, guarded by two of the British soldiers.

The boy did not see him, nor know of his approach till he felt himself in the strong arms that had carried him so often over the rough ways the two had taken together; the strong arms that had shielded every harm from the warped and weakened body.

"Claude," said the priest, "I have but five minutes to speak with you. I paid for it at the price of my gold cross and chain, but it was cheap. To-day we sail. You cannot accompany me; I have pleaded in vain. But can you wait till I return? I do not say when that will be, but I will sometime come to you myself, or send you message where I am and how you can come to me. You have heard from the habi-

tants how the treaty was broken, and know why I failed to meet you here before. You will stay in the house; until autumn there are stores enough. If I provide no other means, and you need it, use the gold I left in your hands; I cannot take it with me and it must still be left in your care — it belongs to the Church, Claude, but I can repay what you use. Have you concealed it as I told you?"

The boy did not speak, but with a nod of assent clung stirless and silent to the priest's hand.

"When winter comes, if you are no longer content, and I have sent you no message, go up the river to Paul; he will care for you as he would care for me, and he would give his life for me. Now, farewell," and bending down, the priest made the sign of the cross upon the white forehead, and turned toward the soldiers.

All this while the boy had not spoken, nor did he now. He turned away from the stare of the men, and with but one look at the face of the

priest, sat down again on the side of the rock and watched them disappear down the stream, the tall robed figure ahead, the two shorter ones following.

At sunrise, a score and more of men passed him on their way to Port Royal to take the oath of allegiance, and on their return in the late afternoon the little forsaken Hunchback still sat by the rock. They stopped to tell him of the sailing of the ships, and the departure of the priest. This news, and hunger, roused him. He rose and with slow steps followed the men, and by nightfall was alone in the quiet little house.

II.

August, and the twentieth day.

Black, tall-masted, long and narrow were the two vessels at anchor in the outer Basin. Black, and narrow, were the two long, low boats which put off from their sides. Black, with white skull

and crossbones was the flag that hung limp and guilty at the head of the tall mainmast. The British flag was flying from the Fort, but the men in the black boats had no fear of its defenders.

No warning of the vessel's approach had reached the inhabitants of Port Royal, nor had they time to flee before the landing of the boats.

They who dared fight the pirates did not see the morning sun. Two men who refused to show the treasure of the chapel were hanged on a limb of the oak-tree near the Fort. A woman who refused like information, was roasted alive, with her little children, in her log hut. Twenty houses were pillaged and burned.

The smoke of the burning buildings alarmed the inhabitants up Lequille River. The Hunchback had spent most of the day in the little house of the priest, which he still occupied. Oppressed with unusual disquiet, he had gone much earlier than was his wont, down the river to the big rock. When the alarm reached the

settlers, he was missing, and in their haste to escape to the thick woods of the mountain, no one made search for him.

Coiled up on the top of the rock he lay, his face turned toward the spot where the Frenchman had buried the money. It was his daily resort, and his usual pastime. Never once since the terrible night when he saw the treasure buried, had these vigils been unkept, and never once had he even parted the rank grass which now grew abundant over the hidden gold.

But a deeper concern than the care of the Frenchman's treasure filled his thoughts through all the long days. He could not remember where he had concealed the casket which contained the gold of the priest. He knew that in the early part of the day the priest had left him, he had buried it securely. But the anger and fright of the interview with De Gautiens, and the fact of the greater treasure left in his power, had united to obliterate all knowledge of the other. As he lay wearily thinking of it on this

evening of the twentieth, vainly trying to recall some incident of the act, he fell asleep.

Waking suddenly, he saw red flames reflected from the sky above the mountain, and smoke rolling above the trees in the valley. Hardly had he time to reach the edge of the rock when a group of men turned the curve of the path and came in full view only a few yards from him.

"The Devil!" exclaimed the foremost man, starting back as he sighted the Hunchback outlined against the lurid light.

"The Devil, or one of his fish out of the river!" said another.

"Take him on to the Settlement and fire him; a knotty stick makes easy burning!" said a third.

"No," said the leader, a black-haired man with a short sword in his right hand, "let him live; that will be torture enough for him. Give him a taste of the water, though; it may untangle his snarled body to climb up over these

slimy red banks — tumble him in, men, and let us on to the houses!"

The boy made no outcry, no resistance, as the rough men drew near to drag him from the rock. It was against his nature to yield, and he had courage to defend his life, but the cruel jests upon his crooked body had weakened his courage and made him powerless to speak or act. Not a day since the priest had left him, but he had to meet this bitter reminder in some form. While the Father was there he had rarely gone about alone, and hardly had he known a taunt, so shielded had he been by the care and love of the strong man.

Inert and passive, all his fear lost in bitter humiliation, he stood and faced without flinch, the men who reached with bloody hands, and hauling from the great rock so often his resting place, dropped him down the muddy banks into the river below, now narrow and shallow, and waiting for the tide to fill its channel.

The pirate crew jeered as he slid down the

slimy sides. Then they went on up the river to finish their cruel work. The rough ridicule of the men, and the recollection of Gautien's gibe, deprived him of his strength, and he would have died there, had not the mere animal instinct of preservation at last impelled him to crawl through the red mud to the river's rim. There he lay, exhausted, until morning, when the warm August sunshine dried his mud-caked clothing, and revived his chilled and stiffened limbs.

Half bewildered, he rose and walked toward the Settlement. Nothing but smoking ruins met his sight. Not a house was left standing. His shelter was gone, his stores gone; now was the time to go to the faithful Indian; and he at once set out through the thick forest to the encampment on the mountain side.

The river above tide reach was a tumbling, twisting stream. Along its edge was the well-worn trail, half-hidden at times by thick underbrush. Toilsome and slow along this rough

footway, he clambered to the wigwam of Paul, who welcomed him with fond and kind words. Medicine Paul, he was called. His wigwam was in a lonely spot, half a mile above the encampment. When his people were ailing, he visited them and cured them; when they were well he seldom entered their camps. His skill as a doctor had spread beyond the woods. During the previous winter when a strange disease had baffled their own physician, the garrison had gladly sought his services.

It was well he had skill, for the Hunchback waked in the morning with a high fever. For weeks he lay in the wigwam, knowing not even the Indian, talking sometimes of the priest, rehearsing the scene of the parting, and sometimes still, and picking restlessly at the soft blan-coating which formed his bed.

The leaves had fallen when he grew strong enough to one day walk again down the narrow footpath to the rock. He found the treasure undisturbed, the grass was dead and matted

over the spot where it was buried. Every third day after this, he made the toilsome journey. As winter approached he started earlier, and returned later. Often the Indian went to meet him, and carried him back, the shrivelled form hardly seeming a weight to the sinewy frame that could sling a caribou, and tramp fresh trails untired.

Paul had asked no questions as to these journeys. He received him when he came back from them, fed and cared for him, and set the best of the food before him; and on his return from the trading station, brought always some delicacy which he did not share in the eating. He knew the boy waited for the priest, and he knew, too, that unless he came soon, the waiting and the coming would be vain.

The painful hunted look on the white face when the boy came to him, was no longer there; He was never taunted now. The stern wordless love of the Indian, and the quiet efficacy of the great trees had turned his bitter thoughts into

peaceful channels, and he spoke of his deformity but seldom.

The two talked together of many things, but oftenest of the priest. Sometimes the boy would coax to hear again the story of the time he found him and carried him away in his arms, crying because he was small and crooked. Then he would himself rehearse that other scene, as his imagination had pictured it, of the cruel, laughing man; but the Indian, quick to perceive the look that came over the thin white face, brought his mind back always to the priest. And as the long winter wore away the boy grew more reconciled to his weakness.

Early in the spring a message came from the Father. Only the words given to Paul by another Indian, but he had it from another, and he from another, till the province and the seas were spanned by this telephone of the universe:

"*The Father will sail from France in May. Wait.*"

Only by word of mouth came the message,

but starting from the lips of the Jesuit, and carried by as trusty ones, the viewless line was never broken, nor the true magnetic current once disturbed.

The message had a wonderful effect upon the boy. He grew suddenly better.

The sunny days of May passed into the silent summer months. The sudden strength failed, and again the journeys to the rock had to be given up. Sometimes for a week he never stirred from the blancoating. Then the Indian would carry him to the doorway of the wigwam, and often into the woods where he went to gather his medicines. This would give him new strength, and he would try to walk down the river to the rock, but Paul would overtake him and carry him, and leave him alone there for hours. A new thought troubled him as he lay there in the golden waning days of autumn. If he should die before the Father came should he tell Paul of the buried treasure? Should he even tell the priest? If Gautiens were dead,

some one must know that the money could be given to the French king.

But the thought which most weakened him was that he could not yet remember where he had hidden the gold of the priest. Would the priest believe him if he told him this? And should he leave the word with Paul, if the priest came too late?

September and October passed, and the hope of the Father's coming grew faint and weak. So did the worn little body. But he lay always with his face toward the opening of the camp, that he might first see him if he did come.

Meanwhile, the priest had been making every effort in his power to keep his promise of returning. The winter was occupied in pleading, and by spring he obtained of the French monarch an order for Villebon to proceed with a force to retake the colony of Acadie. Then it was that he sent the message to the boy. A week later, he followed the message, in the *Afrikede Solon*, the fastest sailing vessel of the

age, and the beginning of July saw them in Quebec. But from apprehension of an attack on the city, by the English, Frontenac detained the vessel several months, and it was the twenty-sixth of November when she arrived at Port Royal, accompanied by a sloop of war.

They found the English flag flying from the Fort, but no Englishmen to defend it, and the French soldiers landed without resistance. With the soldiers was Father Petete. Soon as they reached the shore he proceeded up the river to the wigwam of Paul. Perriot, the former French Governor of Port Royal, had acquainted him with the visit of the pirates and their work of pillage, so it was with no surprise he saw the desolate spot where his own and the other houses of the Settlement had stood.

The day was one of the warm mellow days that brighten November with memories of the summer past; and it was noon when the priest reached the wigwam.

Paul was not there. The Hunchback lay

alone on the blancoated bed of boughs at the head of the camp, his face to the opening. But the brown eyes were closed in sleep, and the intent ears that had listened so long for this step were dull to its approach. The face looked pitifully shrunken and white, and the fair hair had been left to grow, and hung about his humped shoulders. He was slowly fading away, no pain, no visible cause — a loss of strength from day to day, and life only kept in the body by this strong desire to wait for the coming of the priest.

No thought of the boy's death had entered the priest's mind, in his care to reach him. He had looked forward to his future and planned it for him; and in fulfillment of the plans had come now to take him back to France.

The sudden shock of seeing him thus, the pathos of the thin white face resting upon the withered little hand, the shrunken deformity of the poor wasted body, and the knowledge of all the brave spirit had foregone, overcame him,

and he sank down upon the ground beside the bed, and wept as he had not since that other day so long ago.

The boy waked, and started up with a glad cry of recognition.

"I told you to wait, and I would come," said the Father gently, holding the little hands firmly in his own.

"I waited," said the boy.

"And I came," replied the priest. Then he told to him all the long adventure of the journey. When he had finished, the Indian entered the camp. He had sighted the priest far down the river, but had left the two alone for their first greetings. Now he came for his own welcome. There was no distinction of race; the priest laid his white hand in the hard brown-colored ones of the Indian, and there was a moment of silence. Each gazed in the other's face. There had been a bond of life and death between them once, and neither of them could ever forget or suffer a breach of it.

"I would have come sooner had it been possible," said the priest. "But I knew you would care for him, and I felt relieved in knowing also that with the gold the boy had, you could both be comfortable for years, had I not been able to reach you."

The Indian glanced at the boy, and the boy looked first in his face, then over at the priest. "There has been no gold to use, Father Petete," he said, "I cannot remember where I hid it — O, will you believe me, and not think I have stolen it? Truly, I cannot remember — but do you believe me?" and he grasped excitedly the priest's hands.

"Hush, Claude," said the priest gently. "Why should I not believe you? Did you ever deceive me? Tell me about it."

"I know nothing to tell," he said, "except that I took it from the house the day you left me, and buried it somewhere — the day before the night you met me at the rock. And your going away and leaving me alone — and some-

thing else that happened that night to frighten me, made me forget, someway. I have tried, every day, to remember, but it will not come to me, and I was afraid you would think I lied, that is what has made me weak; I think so much about it. But no matter how much I think, it will not come to me — even my head cannot do anything straight," he added with a smile, "even my head is kinked, like my body."

For answer the priest laid his hand with the old soothing gesture upon the boy's forehead.

He smiled again. "I do not rave about it now, Father," he said, "hardly ever now. Paul has told me the story so often, that I see and think only of you, and not of the one who made me humpbacked."

A glance passed between the two men.

"I have always thought that I would see him sometime, and hurt him," continued the boy, not noticing the glance. "But I do not think that now — going so much sooner makes it all different — and then what would be the use;

nothing I could do or say, could make him understand what it has been to me, and I would not like for him to half-know. I thought that after I first began to feel less ugly to him; but lately, I have not wanted to even tell him if I could — I almost think I could see him and not say a word. I never believed I could get to feel this way, but it is all so different, everything is so different when you have days and days to think about it, and know you are going so soon. But I would like to prove myself, only to see if I could look at him and the old hate gone."

A shadow clouded the face of the priest. He opened his lips to speak, but closed them again without a sound.

"It was a dreadful thing to do, and he may have been sorry, though Paul said he laughed. O, how could he laugh!" and the thin face lit up for an instant with the old fire and hatred. As instantly did it fade. "But if he has been sorry since, I would like him to know I don't hate so much, now. I was sure yesterday, I could for-

give him — but it hurts so, when I talk about it, that I'm almost afraid now I could not. Though if he is sorry, I would like just to let him know. O I wish I had not spoken about it!"

The Indian rose, and went over and stood in the opening, his face turned from the two in the wigwam. And the priest hid his own in his hands as he leaned forward and spoke to the boy.

"Claude," he said, "Claude, I think he does know."

The boy looked up with wonder at the words. "You have seen him?" he asked, "and told him?"

"No," said the priest. "I mean that he knows — that you have shown him — Claude, I — Tell him, Paul, I cannot."

The Indian turned and faced the two, the boy eager with wonder, the man weak with humility.

"Tell me, Paul," repeated the boy. "What does he mean?"

"He mean," said the Indian slowly, "both men one man — one who laugh, one who cry, same man — first laugh, then cry, laugh last only little while, cry last all years, to now — cry wash laugh all out, no more laugh, only big sorry now, big sorry all time since the cry — only one man, man who cry."

The boy understood. His white face turned whiter, then flamed for a moment with passion, and faded again to its wonted paleness. But he did not speak. Outside, the glow of the moon had changed to gray, and the green shadows from the firs entered the wigwam and cast a gloom over all.

A step broke the twigs of the footpath, and a man pushed past the Indian and entered the camp. It was the French Secretary Des Gautiens. He had come to Port Royal in the same ship with the priest, but had spoken no word concerning the buried treasure. Making no answer now to the priest's inquiring look, he went direct to the bed where the Hunchback

lay. "Your pardon again, lad," he said. "The money is safe. You are made of stuff like the rock itself. Your pardon for my hard words and rough usage."

This time the boy did not refuse the proffered hand. But filled with other thoughts, he made no reply and listened silently, while Gautiens related the story of the hidden treasure. "The king shall give him a generous share," said the secretary, "and he can live in luxury the rest of his days, and know that it pays to have a straight soul, if the body be bent."

At these words the priest lost his interest in the Frenchman's tale, and turned again to the Hunchback.

"Now if I could but remember where the casket is hid," said the boy wearily, as he met the Father's glance. "If I could do that, then I would have done all the things I waited for — all the things."

"Not all, Claude," interposed the priest. "Not all, there is one thing yet."

"It seems as if I might remember," he wearily continued, unmindful of the Father's words, "it seems as if I might, but I cannot." And a shadow that was not from the firs, settled on the white face.

"There is one thing yet you have not done," said the priest again. "Can you not do it? I have no right to it, but say it to comfort me. Think a moment, and say it."

"I am thinking, all the time," he replied — "all the time, and — most, about the man who picked me up — and cried. Oh, if I could but remember where the gold is! I can almost remember — now — almost" And the eyes brightened for an instant, and then the light faded from them forever. And the contorted little form was no longer a humiliation to the brave spirit it had imprisoned.

The buried treasure was delivered to the French monarch. The reward promised the Hunchback, Des Gautiens himself received; and in further recognition of his act of integrity, he

was given the high office of Commissaire Ordonnateur, which he held until his death.

The casket of gold has never yet been found. Some who tell the story say that the Indian knew its hiding place and reserved it for his own people. Others think the priest himself secured it before he returned to France. More than one adventurer has sought it, and many believe that somewhere in the vicinity of the great rock it will yet be found.

II.

THE KADUSKAK GIANT.

SEPTEMBER, 1795. Breeze-kissed and azure-crested, in the depths of the "forest primeval" lay the great Lake Rosignol. Seventy square miles of placid pure fresh water, stretching out into deep shadowy bays and gemmed with a hundred tree-crowned islands. Over its rippling surface swam the wary wild fowls, and down to its white sand shores came the untamed beasts to drink of its limpid waters.

"Rosignol" was the name of the first white man who looked upon this, the largest area of fresh water in Nova Scotia. In the latter part of the sixteenth century he traded with the Indians who lived along the river that runs from this lake to the ocean. De Monts, commander

of the French colonization emprise in 1604, found him at the mouth of the river, and robbed him of his stores. He wandered off into the great forest and finally died, on a small island near the north end of this lake, and his name like a lost spirit has ever since clung to its blue waters and echoed among its surrounding hills.

On the western shore is a deep and narrow rapid stream or channel, which discharges into Lake Rosignol the great volume of water of the chain of lakes to the north. This stream cuts through a narrow ridge of land which forms a dam, holding back the water and raising it many feet above the lower lake, hence the roaring rapidity of the water, designated by the Indians "Kaduskak," which means "screecher."

To the north of this Kaduskak was a great hard-wood hill, rising toward the sky like the dome of some vast edifice, throwing giant shadows deep down in the dusky water of Rosignol on its southeast, and spreading acres of reflected forest over the twilight surface of the silvery

lakes to the north and west. Here for centuries out of memory the wild men of these regions had buried their dead. The great beeches and oaks had never felt the shriveling smoke of the camp fire or echoed the twang of the hunter's bow; the whole hill was Sacred Ground.

Early in the forenoon of this twentieth day of September, 1795, two canoes, each containing a white man and two Indians, came up Lake Rosignol and landed at the foot of the hill, near the north bank of the Kaduskak.

The white men were Frenchmen lately from France. They had come to this place from Liverpool at the mouth of the river, and had there secured the services of the Indians, who were old hunters and experienced guides, to take them up the lakes.

The Indians were not long in finding out that the handsome athletic men whom they served were not only practiced huntsmen, but knew more than they told about the locality chosen for the hunting ground. For the strangers had

themselves selected the place to land, directed where the camp should be built, and designated the rivers and lakes and point of land with the names by which they were known to the Indian people. And though they enjoyed as keenly as their guides the exciting contests with the moose which the Indians with their long birchbark cones would call up just at daydawn, they spent most of their time alone, and often for whole days staid on the great hill, among the graves under the fine old trees, as if in search of something.

One day one of the Indians who saw them thus raking among the dead leaves, said: "Long ago — one time — Indian findem here very fine small gun — maybe you findem nother."

The men were at once eager and full of questions about the gun, and learned that it had been picked up by an Indian, then Chief of the Micmacs, named Alexis, and that he lived at Liverpool Ponhook, now called Indian Gardens. It was a distance of about nine miles, and they at once set out for the place.

Far back as tradition ran, this spot had been a favorite dwelling-place for the red men of Acadia. South of it and swarming with fish, ran the great river to the ocean. North of it, flecked with wild fowl, was the majestic Rosignol. East and west were vast forests filled with moose and caribou and smaller game. Thus surrounded and supported, here lived and loved and died these wild forest dwellers, now nearly exterminated.

The old chief was soon found and received his visitors like one who extends rather than accepts patronage.

At first he stolidly refused to let the strangers even see the small gun. A rich present at length persuaded him, and he brought from its place of safety a pistol of large caliber, richly mounted in gold and silver and mother-of-pearl, such as was carried about the middle of the seventeenth century by the French nobility.

The firearm was in good keeping, and evidently highly prized by its present possessor.

The Frenchmen offered to buy it, at the Indian's own price. "Me no sell 'em," said the chief. "Me find 'em — no mine. Maybe man who lose come some day, then I give 'em him — no sell um, not mine — I find 'em."

Seeing that no persuasion of money could induce the chief to part with the weapon, the Frenchmen said: "Well, I tell you a story, then perhaps you sell me the gun."

"May be," said the Indian, "I give you otter skin, if good story; but not sell you gun."

"You know," said one of the men, "forty years ago my people, the French, were very many in this country — thirty thousand. In September that year British men from Massachusetts, not soldiers, but volunteers, commanded by Colonel Winslow, came here, and by telling lies in the king's name took most of the people prisoners and put them on board vessels and landed them in strange countries, without food or money, so many of them perished from want.

"At Grand Pré the people were first taken,

then at Chignecto, and then at Port Royal. Soon as the people at Port Royal knew what had been done at Grand Pré they held councils. Some wanted to go to France in a ship then in the harbor, others wished to go to the woods and remain concealed until the soldiers had left, and then return to their homes.

"Among those who wanted to go in the ship was a young man from Paris, named Pierre Alençon, the youngest son of Count Alençon of France. This young man was an artist. He had been in this country three years taking sketches and making pictures of the scenery.

"After two years he was ready to return to France; but at Grand Pré he made acquaintance with a young girl whom he met at the house of the village curé. This girl's name was Pauline. She was the child of a French girl who had been taken captive by the Iroquois Indians at a battle with the Micmacs, and forced to marry a young brave of that tribe. When she was ten years old her mother died, and soon

after her father was killed in battle. She had no home, and wandered back to her mother's people, living sometimes with them and sometimes with the Micmac Indians.

"Pauline was beautiful, like the wild flowers and birds; when the artist saw her he loved her, but knew he could never marry her. Pauline did not know or understand the bar of nobility, and loved the artist without hinderance of thought.

"A year of this acquaintance passed. During the summer Pauline had been at Port Royal with her mother's people; and on this afternoon of September, 1755, was among the Acadians.

"She and the artist were apart from the others near the edge of the forest, and Alençon was persuading the girl to go with him in the ship to France. But his persuasions were useless; she would go, but only as his wife.

"While he was anxiously talking there came upon the air the sharp twang of a bow-string, and an arrow passed through his body and fell to the ground a few yards distant. The girl

gave a loud cry of alarm. Her alarm was not alone for the wounded artist, but for her own safety. She knew well that only one man in the country could send an arrow with such force, and he was the hated Iroquois giant, Plasquit."

The old chief had listened indifferently and in silence. But at the mention of Plasquit he turned his face a little toward the story-teller.

"This man," continued the Frenchman, "was now in the service of the British, as a guide and spy. He had followed the girl two years, and claimed her for his wife because her father was an Iroquois and he an Iroquois brave.

"Her cry brought instant assistance from the group of men near, and it was soon found that the arrow was not barbed, and the wound not certainly fatal. The giant had been concealed in the woods near by, and fled as soon as he saw that his arrow had done its fatal work.

"In the same hour came tidings from the town that the soldiers were marching upon the

settlement, and a vessel was at the entrance of the harbor to prevent escape by sea.

"There was left them no alternative but to flee to the woods. By dark they collected what arms they had, and as much provision as they could carry, and set out for a hiding-place in the depths of the great forests to the south of them. The wounded artist was carried on a kind of handbarrow hastily constructed out of such materials as were near at hand.

"Some friendly Micmacs accompanied them as guides and advisers. Great care was taken to leave no trail. The Indians knew the country well, and led them over the hard land, among the rocks and large old trees, so that no footprint could be found; and no one was allowed to pluck a leaf or break a branch.

"By dawn they had made six miles. The next night seven more miles, and they reached a small stream on the south side of the mountain. Here they prepared to camp and keep concealed from the soldiers should they attempt to

PAULINE GAVE A LOUD CRY.

hunt them out. The third day two of the Indians who had gone to the town returned with the news that Plasquit with some of the soldiers were about to beat the woods in search of them. From the soldiers alone they had not much fear; they had already grown weary of the cruel work and would do no more than reluctantly obey orders. But the giant Plasquit had an enemy to kill, and a prize to capture, and he would assuredly find them.

"It was clear that they must either return to the settlement and give themselves up, or make a forced march through the forest to the Atlantic coast, a distance of about fifty miles; and they decided to make the march.

"But the artist was now in the delirium of fever and could not be carried. Pauline and two Micmacs volunteered to remain with him and take their chances of escaping Plasquit.

"There were two canoes at the headwater of the river, two miles distant. To these the people helped carry the sick man, placed him in

one of them, and some provisions in the other. The two Indians were each armed with a tomahawk and bow and arrow, and woodman's axe. The only firearms in their possession was an army pistol, always carried by the artist, and now stuck in the belt of Pauline's dress."

"Uough," said the Indian, and this time turned his face full toward the story-teller.

"For three days they paddled the canoes south, down the streams and through the lakes, till they came to the burying-ground at Kaduskak. There they landed and built a camp near the east shore of the stream. Here they considered themselves safe even from Plasquit. They had left no trail, and he could not know that they were not with the people who had marched across the country.

"The artist was still delirious. For two weeks they staid there, unmolested, Pauline caring for the sick man, and the two Indians providing the food and guarding the camp.

"One afternoon as they watched, they saw a

raft of logs floating down the lake toward the Kaduskak. It was far up the lake, but was slowly approaching the shore near their camp, although the wind was blowing up the lake.

"A raft on a lake, with no one to propel it and going against the wind, was enough to put these red men on their guard. One of them climbed a spruce-tree, and after watching for some time until the raft drew nearer, saw lying flat among the logs that were piled along the sides, the huge body of Plasquit, and beside him four soldiers and five muskets. "Certain that they were discovered, the Indians and Pauline set themselves to work to defend the camp. It was useless to attempt escape.

"Before dark the wind suddenly increased to a furious gale, and raised such a sea that the raft began to break up, and its occupants were forced to cling to the separate logs and allow themselves to drift before the wind, which landed them toward morning on the southwest shore of the lake.

"Lying in the rapid stream, and reaching nearly across it was a large tree, which had blown down in the gale that broke up the raft. This tree would form a bridge for Plasquit and his men to cross. White men in this situation might have cut the tree from its roots and sent it adrift; not so the Micmacs. From it to the camp was about three hundred steps, through trees that were set close together. All day the Indians and Pauline cut and twisted withes, and tied them from tree to tree, between this landing place and the camp, about as high as a man's knee from the ground. In and out, in every direction these wood ropes were woven, like a net, always across the way from the tree to the camp, but open at the ends so the Indians could run in between them and strike a man who would be tripped by going against them. They were the color of the trees among which they twined, and could not be seen in the night.

"This done, Pauline, under the directions of the artist, who had in the anxiety of the work

rallied considerably, drew from the pistol the load, picked the flint, and carefully reloaded it with two balls and as heavy a charge of powder as it would safely carry. Then they watched and waited the attack.

"As the Indians expected, Plasquit chose the fallen tree to cross the channel. Leading his men, and waiting on the shore till all were at his side, with a whoop like the bellow of a bull he sprang, hatchet in hand, among the trees; only to find himself thrown headlong on the ground, and by the time he got to his feet to see two of his men dispatched with tomahawks.

"He sprang back to the bank, seized his musket and fired at one of the Indians as he was driving his tomahawk into the head of another of the soldiers. The Indian fell, but at the same time the remaining soldier was killed by the other Indian.

"Again Plasquit seized his hatchet, and rushed against the network. It gave way before his great strength as if the withes were threads

of tow. The surviving Indian feared to attack him, and in a moment he was at the last rope next the camp.

"There Pauline met him, with the pistol in her right hand. The withe gave way as had the others, and with a yell of triumph he sprang forward and clasped the girl in his giant arms, and the same instant fell to the ground with two bullets through his heart. Pauline following the artist's instructions fired when the muzzle of the pistol was almost against his breast.

"The arms tightened around her as death convulsed the great muscular frame, and she fell to the earth with him. When the Indian came to rescue her he found her pale and cold and covered with blood, and he supposed her dead.

"The suspense and terror of the fight had stupefied the artist, and he lay all through the night unconscious. When he came out of the stupor at daydawn, his quick ear caught the sound of Pauline's voice. Thoughtless of his condition he rose and walked to the place where

she lay, locked fast in the dead giant's arms. She had but fainted with the fright of her situation and the deed she had done, and for three hours had lain in that condition.

"The Indian had fallen asleep, but wakened and hastened to the spot, and together they sought to extricate the girl from the dead embrace. Their united strength was not enough to bend the giant arms now stiffened in death, and they were forced to break them with a hatchet. Pauline was unhurt.

"The Indian buried his companion, and secured the guns of the soldiers, and their ammunition. Then taking the largest canoe, he and Pauline placed the Frenchman on the bottom, and taking their positions, each with a paddle, at either end, they started off down the great lake, toward the river that ran to the sea.

"At that time there was no settlement at this place, but they found there a vessel nearly ready to sail for France, loaded with fish, and valuable skins purchased from the Indians.

"From the night of the fight at Kaduskak, the young artist had been constantly growing better, and had by this time nearly recovered his usual strength. Among those who were to take passage in the ship was a missionary priest who had been out for some years with the Micmacs and was now about to return to France. Pierre Alençon's proud family had now no weight when put in the balance against the girl's love and bravery in risking life and honor for his sake. He asked her to marry him, and the same day the missionary priest made them man and wife.

"When they bade the brave and faithful Micmac good-by, and gathered up the few things they wished to take with them, they then for the first time missed the pistol with which Pauline shot the giant. The loss of it was a great grief to the artist, for the weapon was of great value. It had been made by a wonderful gunsmith and the stock was inlaid with gold and silver."

"Uough!" repeated the Indian.

"Neither of them had seen it after the shoot-

ing. There was no time to make search, and they sailed for France without it and never came back. But two of their sons came. *We* are the children of Pauline and Pierre Alençon. We will give you great price for this pistol. It is the one our mother killed the giant with."

"Your father alive?" asked the old Indian.

"Our father died three years ago."

"Your mother alive?"

"She was when we left France."

The old chief handed the pistol to the man who told the story. "You take it France," he said, "give it your mother — tell her I keep it for owner — owner dead, now hers — good-by."

No persuasions could make him take anything in return, and the strangers were obliged to leave without rewarding this old king of the forest for his stolid adherence to do right.

About ten years ago there went from Milton in Queen's County, up the river to Indian Gardens, a party of gentlemen on a hunting tramp.

With the party was a professor of a Western College, who wished to get a skeleton of a male Micmac Indian. He and two others of the party concluded to rob the burying-ground at Kaduskak. They opened a very long mound and found complete a massive skeleton, with the bones of both arms broken.

An old Micmac named Cobleale Glode (who has since died) was asked about this giant skeleton. "Uough," said he, "Plasquit!" and told the story substantially as told here. He said he was told it by the old Chief Alexis.

Nearly a century has elapsed since the old Sagomo heard the story from the Frenchmen, and the lumberman's axe and scathing fires have denuded the islands and forests along the shores of Rosignol. But the breeze still dimples its surface, and the little waves still fret its sandy shores; the hills still mirror themselves in its deep quiet bays, and the wild fowl still dip over its moonlit breast.

III.

THE FUGITIVES OF FRENCH CROSS.

THE southern coastline of the Bay of Fundy directly opposite Isle Haut, makes a bend into the range of hills called North Mountain, thus gaining for its boisterous waters a peaceful sweep of perhaps three square miles of surface. From the radius of this curve the great Bluff that forms the sea-wall, sentinel-lined with straight black spruces, breaks and bends and dips till either end is lost to view in the blue of sky and sea.

Near the western slope of the bend, a point of land, green to within a few yards of tide-mark, stretches out into the Bay. On this point, where the green merges into the gray of the rocky shore, a white cross, seven feet high,

stands outlined against the blue water; and the green of the sod around it for many rods is like that of old battle-fields where human bones enrich the soil beneath and feed the herbage above.

The brown-leaved beeches that stretch their long branches out over the stony mountain road, make a hazel flutter in the breeze, but tell no tale of the Cross. The little brook that rushes over its rocky bed by the point, sparkles and frets its grassy shores, and loses itself in the great Bay, with never a syllable of the years of the past. The foaming tide that laps and swirls up over the rocks and the dim gray sand comprehends not the mystery. The tall firs that stand in clumps on either side the brook are of other centuries and know the story; but they have been long visited in vain by the balm of spring and summer, and drooping silver moss drapes their dead and whitened branches. Only the dark, green grass about the Cross chronicles the tale of its erection; only in its verdure is there relic of the sad occasion.

1755, September 12th.

At Belisle, on the river near Port Royal, the grand old forest of mountain and valley was bright with the many-colored leaves of autumn. But there was neither sunlight nor gladness in the abodes of the hamlet. Belisle was full of sorrow and perplexity. This day the news had reached the people that they were prisoners of the English king, and as soon as his soldiers could reach the place, their houses and barns would be burned, and themselves put on board vessels to be taken to strange countries, to perish from loneliness of heart and wretchedness of condition. Their only escape from such a fate was secretion in the vast forests about them, and this stern alternative these hitherto free and happy French Acadians had accepted.

Since dawn they had been busy in preparation for the abandonment of their comfortable, cheerful homes, and all that the labor of their hands had accumulated and made their own.

Their storehouses and barns filled with winter supplies, their cattle, their fowls, their comfortable beds and social firesides were to be left for destruction and confiscation. Not a man or woman but must part with breaking heart from productive acres and endeared habitation, and plunge into the wild woods of the great hills.

All day the men in groups had been going to and from the log house of Pierre Melancon which stood among the great trees about half a mile from the settlement. This man was a hunter and trapper. All the country knew Pierre Melancon, and he knew the country. Hardly a square mile of forest that had not felt his footstep; even the Bay of Fundy had been crossed by him, and the land beyond it was not unfamiliar. His terrible strength and powers of endurance had made him known to both French and Indians. No man among them could travel so far in a day or carry so great a load. His adventures with wild beasts and wild Indians were everywhere told with wonder

and admiration. And though Time had registered seventy and five years against him, and whitened his beard and hair, he was still erect and strong, and feared and admired. And when on this day of distress three hundred of his countrymen started from Belisle, it was by universal consent he was chosen their leader and protector.

Soon as darkness came over the hamlet, this forlorn hope of a captured and expatriated people set out for the fastness of the old woods.

Some of the men carried guns and ammunition, others carried provisions hastily prepared, the women and children carried clothing and blankets, and not a few of them had in their arms children too young to walk. One man only was loaded with what seemed a useless burden. On his shoulders was a pickaxe and shovel and coil of rope.

All that night they journeyed, up the side of the mountain that separates the valley where they had lived so happily, from the blue Bay

of Fundy to the north of them, and early in the forenoon of the next day they reached its summit and rested.

The plan of march was to keep on the top of the mountain range and make their way eastward to the bluff of Blomidon. From there the distance by water was short to the mainland across the Bay. In the vicinity of Blomidon they hoped to find some friendly Indians who would convey them to Chignecto, where there was a large Indian encampment; and from there their march would be easy to the numerous French villages between Chignecto and Beau Sejeur.

The distance to this Bluff was about one hundred miles. For four weeks they journeyed, some part of each day and all of the nights resting, and had made fifty miles of their march when they were met by an unlooked-for foe. Seven times in these weeks had the pickaxe and shovel been used, and each time a little mound of fresh earth at the roots of a tree told the tale

of a mother's bereavement. The provisions brought from the farms were entirely gone, and beechnuts and game were the only available food. It did not agree with the stomachs of this cereal and vegetable-fed people, and at the end of the fourth week what had at first seemed only a casual sickness developed into a deadly malady, and not a child of the party but was stricken with it.

They slackened their march, and for seven days made not as many miles of their journey. By this time the sickness had spread to the weaker of the adults.

They held council together, and at the decision of their leader, directed their march over and down the mountain, and at nightfall came to a quiet little cove making into the mountain-side from the Bay of Fundy, with shallow sand shores lined with old pines and beeches of primeval growth. Here the wise old hunter hoped by means of brush weirs constructed beneath high-water level to catch some tide-

belated fish, and thus by change of food to check or destroy the malady that had so fatally seized upon his people.

The day following their arrival was clear and warm, and was spent in making their camps for a couple of weeks' stay. Under the thousand-year-old beeches, many of which still retained their leaves, ripe but not ready to fall, these camps were built out of the boughs of firs, and beds made from younger growths of the same tree. Some brush was cut and carried down to the shore to construct the weirs on the morrow. Then the sick and weary fugitives laid themselves down to sleep with the consoling thought of fresh food for another day.

Night came on, clear and calm and liquid, with myriad stars flashing in a cloudless autumn sky. But midnight brought a change, and before the dawn a snowstorm from northeast was piling its cold crystals around the camps and over the ground. All the next day and night the air was thick with the drifting snow, and

the following day saw the whole country round covered to the depth of two feet and the air intensely cold.

The disheartened Acadians knew well what this unexpected storm meant for them. Winter had "set in," they said to one another, and all hope of reaching their friends across the Bay was now at an end. With the last whirl of the uncompromising snow, that hope had expired. Here they must remain until spring.

The cold they did not fear; fuel was plenty, and the great beeches under which their camps were built kept out the cold wind, and in the heat of the camp-fire. Food was the necessity for which there seemed no source of supply. Even the prospect of fresh fish was almost entirely cut off by the intense cold that froze the ebbing tide to the rocks and sand, and covered the bottom, where the weirs should be made, with thick ice.

Their ammunition for the guns was mostly gone, and travel in search of game could only

be done by strong men, and of these but few now remained, for hardy as these Acadian farmers were, they could not endure change of food and unusual fatigue. The only certainly attainable tood was the small bivalves called mussels, that cling to the tide-submerged rocks; and these could be got only by exposure to wet and cold.

Four months they lived on these fish — died on them — for as the heaps of empty shells without the camps grew daily higher, the people within who were trying to subsist upon their viscous contents grew despairingly less, and on the first day of March there was left but ninety of the three hundred. The ominous pickaxe and shovel had covered more than two hundred of those who cast inquiring glances at them on the day of the start.

March came in "like a lamb," and continued fine. The snow gradually melted, the ice-caked rocks came out of their clothing of frost, gray and weedy and regardless of suffering humanity

about them. The little brook from the mountain side, released from its imprisonment of ice, babbled its old spring melody as it rushed onward to the salt green sea. Birds from seaward and animals from land skimmed the shores and roamed round the camps, but to no avail for the starving inmates; the ammunition had been long exhausted and their guns were useless.

The distress of the past months was nothing compared with these days of March. Through some freak of nature the mussels that had hitherto been found clinging to the rocks were not there when the ebbing tide disclosed their wonted resting place. For more than a week the rocks were visited vainly by the starving fugitives; then a few were found. But there were fewer people to need them, for in this time their number was reduced to sixty.

In this starving condition they remained until the seventeenth, and at noon of this day a canoe containing two Indians, came up the Bay in search of porpoise.

One of the Indians was an old man, the other a young strong lad. They met with friendly words the starving men who rushed to the shore and when they had landed their canoe freely dispensed their provision among the people.

There seemed little hope, however, of receiving from them more than the immediate relief. They were not from a large encampment as the Acadians had at first supposed, but had a solitary camp down the Bay.

But in the course of their talk the old Indian learned the name of their leader, and the distress he had shown at being unable to rescue the fugitives seemed to vanish at mention of this old hunter whose deeds of might and bravery had made him known to all in days long past. All the afternoon the Indian went about and talked with the people, and as he left each camp he left hope in the faces of the famishing inmates. From camp to camp the strongest men followed, a dozen accompanying him when near sunset he approached the shelter of Pierre

Melancon, who true to his life-long seclusion had made his abode separate from the others.

For weeks the old hunter had not been out; he was stricken with the same malady that had proved fatal to so many of his companions.

The Indian led the way and entered first the camp. Seated on a bed of worn-out boughs was the gaunt and shrunken frame of the giant hunter. His white hair and beard, uncut and uncombed for months, rested on his brawny shoulders and broad breast. At sight of the Indian he gave the Micmac salutation of friendship, and bade the men enter.

"Is there help?" he asked.

A few of the men responded to his bidding, but none of them met his glance as the foremost of them answered, "There may be help."

The old Indian seated himself beside him, and without a word of explanation said: "You been across the Bay to Chignecto in canoe?"

"Aye, twice," replied Pierre Melancon, with a gleam of pride lighting his sunken eyes.

"My people and your people are there — many — they would come and bring you in canoes if they knew," said the Indian.

"Aye, if they knew!" echoed the old man sadly, as he looked at the men who stood in the doorway of the camp, their white starving faces a dumb echo to his sad words.

"I have here," said the Indian, "a good canoe, and my boy, brave and strong — he will paddle canoe across, but does not know the course, nor the bad eddies in the tide on the other shore."

"The tide and the bad eddies and the other shore," murmured the old hunter to himself.

"Could you find that other shore again?" asked the Indian.

"Who could find it so well?" he asked.

"Aye, who could find it so well as you," echoed the men outside the opening, "who could find it so well as you?"

The old wife Josette had been sitting silent at the head of the camp. As she heard the

murmur of the men she started, and glanced sharply at them, at the new tone in their voices, the new look in their eager, hungry eyes; and she read their wish. She rose, and sat down in front of the weak and wasted form of the old hunter, who seemed hardly to hear the words or comprehend their significance.

"The tide and the currents and eddies, and the other shore — the other shore," he still murmured, as if recalling his past life with its deeds of strength and daring. "Who knows them so well as Pierre Melancon!"

"To-day," said the old Indian slowly, "is Saint Patrick's — moon full — always calm on sea then — no storm in two days. My brave will paddle — will old hunter go too and guide to other shore and keep canoe from bad tide and eddies?"

The old man's hands dropped on his knees. He turned and looked at the men. Then his head fell forward on his breast, and there was silence in the camp.

The men now crowded eagerly within the opening, but no one spoke. The faithful old wife drew nearer him and placed her small thin old hands in his great bony ones and held them there for minutes — it seemed hours to those who watched.

A shudder came over the man, and shook him as with mortal fear; then it subsided and he breathed long and labored, like a strong man in deep sleep.

At last the old wife said:

"Pierre, you will go, your strength may come back."

The old man raised his bowed head, and seeming for the first time to recognize her, said firmly:

"Aye, old wife, it has come," and rising to his feet he said to the Indian:

"I will go to the other shore, and I will paddle the canoe, too." And without further words from his tightly-closed lips Pierre Melancon placed on his white head a small cap of otter-

skin and stepped outside the camp, followed by the silent old wife who still held firmly to one of her husband's hard hands.

It was now sundown. The full moon was already silvering the crested waves of the great fretful Bay, and the tide at full flood surged lazily against the gray rocks on the shore and backed up the waters of the rippling brook, while it waited the summons seaward.

Direct to the shore where the canoe lay the old man walked, rapidly and firmly, the men who had accompanied the Indian to the camp, and many others of the party, following.

At the shore they brought to him their last food — three of the twenty mussels they had that day secured from the rocks. But he did not eat.

"You must eat to give you strength," they said.

"I have strength," he replied, "and I have not tasted food for two days." And turning to the young Indian, he said:

"Shove her off, and get into the bow." Then he bent down and kissed his wife's thin white lips, and taking the strongest of the three paddles, he seated himself in the stern, and without further word or signal struck the paddle into the water with such force that the canoe shot ahead like an arrow.

The Indian with equal vigor plied his paddle. Seldom, if ever, went a bark canoe on more humane errand, or was impelled by two men so strong. Both possessed of giant frames, the one fired and fed by the hot blood of youth, the other fired but not fed, with that strange impulse that sometimes seizes upon old men in great emergency and for a time restores the muscular might of younger days.

Seated in the stern the old Frenchman's paddle was both oar and helm, and the Indian in the bow had no other duty than to paddle, and this he did with skill and strength.

Never once slackened the strong strokes. Smaller and smaller grew the fleeting canoe to

HELP FROM THE OTHER SIDE.

the spell-stricken people on the shore, and at length passed from their sight. Higher and higher in the blue star-fretted arch rose the mystic March moon, till it reached the zenith of its course, and then the canoe had reached Isle Haut, that solitary upheaval of igneous rock which lifts its hundred acres of forest four hundred feet from the sea around it. On the south side the massive trap rises in overhanging cliffs of towering grandeur, lofty and inaccessible. On the northeast a collection of sand forms a small bar, and within this is a beautiful basin of clear and placid water. Straight to this basin the dexterous paddle of the old man directed the canoe, so that it lay out of reach of the rushing tide that now swept down the Bay. There they rested.

Then they headed the canoe from the other shore, across the mighty tide river of the great Bay; by the whirling eddies, and over the foaming currents and curling waves above the shoals they skimmed, and at sunrise rounded the lofty

cliff of Chignecto and entered between the isolated towers of greenstone that line the narrow opening a mile east of the cape. Leaving the canoe on the small beach which the sea has thrown up at this place, the old hunter's keen eyes following the trail, they made their way through the thick spruce that skirted the ravines and over the pathless hills, direct to the Indian village.

There he was greeted by many who knew him, both Micmac and French. For from Beaubassin as from Port Royal many of the Acadians had escaped to the woods. The tale of his coming was told in few words, and great was their surprise to learn of their famishing countrymen across the Bay. In two hours volunteers from both French and Indians had manned the strongest of the canoes, and the large boat used in summer for fishing.

While they were busy in the preparations the old hunter rested, but ate nothing; and when they were ready to cross the Bay insisted on re-

turning with them. In vain they promised to bring the old wife back in the first canoe, in vain they urged rest and food. He would return with the others he said to all their entreaties.

And when they gave him his choice of place, he seated himself in the bow of the large boat, with his broad back fitted into the breast-hook and his face toward the shore he had by superhuman effort reached. The young Indian sat near him, with his face toward the other shore.

When the Fugitives lost sight of the fleeting canoe they went to their camps and slept, but when night came on again the men gathered on the shore and began their watch. With the men was the old wife; no entreaties could move her from the rocky point. Long before the others saw she caught sight of the waving line of black off the island, long before the others heard she caught the sound of the oar in the rowlocks, and afar off recognized the great gray head and brawny shoulders in the bow of the large boat.

As they neared the shore she wondered why he did not turn his face shoreward and see her patient waiting. The others who crowded down to gaze on their means of deliverance, wondered the same.

Only the brave young Indian who sat in the bow with him, did not wonder. He had seen in the gray mist the dew gather on the cold pale face, and the dim eyes still fixed on the receding shore lose their luster. He knew, but would not say it, that the brave old hunter had found earth's final shore and was at rest at last.

The boat's keel grated on the sand, and the crew leaped out; only the old man and the Indian remained. Silent and pale as the face into which he looked the Indian sat, till the faithful old wife threw her shrunken arms around the neck of her husband, and with a faint, child-like wail fell over on the wet sand. Then he took the rigid body of the hunter in his strong arms and carried it to a dry place on the beach,

and returned to help the old wife. But she too had found the other shore; that cry was all the anguish earth could claim.

In the spring-mellowed soil on the point they dug a deep wide grave and buried the hunter and his old wife together. And at the head of the grave, deep down to the bottom they set a great rough oak cross, that for more than a hundred years stood there, the mute symbol of hope and suffering.

A day and a night the rescuers rested. The next day was fair and the people were stowed in the canoes and the large boat, and safely carried to the other side of the Bay. The spot where they landed is called Refugee Cove.

A quiet village is now where those liberty-loving Acadians lived and starved and died in that winter of '55. For many years the place was known as French Cross. It is now called Morden.

The old oak cross the Fugitives erected is

gone. Time leveled it to the ground. But another stands in its place, put there in historic remembrance by hands as strong as Pierre Melancon's own.

In these days of reckless vandalism and oblivion of yesterday, it is refreshing to find a man, who for no hope of gain or flattering plaudit, perpetuates the memory of heroic deeds and preserves the history of an expatriated people. He deserves the meed I here bestow — his name is John Moore Orpin.

In an old Episcopal church, in the valley, is another monument of the French Fugitives. Over one hundred years ago the heaps of mussel shells left on the shores of that peaceful cove were carted over the mountain and burned to lime, for mortar to plaster this church of Saint Mary, whose walls are yet white with the relic of suffering humanity.

IV.

THE COW-BELLS OF GRAND PRÉ.

ON the tenth of September, 1755, in the doorway of a small wooden hut at the extreme end of the picketed inclosure containing the new Settlement of Lunenburg, sat a young girl, sturdy, yellow-haired and blue-eyed, born of a race that centuries before had conquered the Island of Britain. And though peaceable and placid where they had been warlike and barbarous, the same dogged and firm obstinacy of purpose was in the strong face and blue eyes that looked down over the Settlement, and out on the waters of the Merleguish Bay, which, in true signification of its Indian name, stretched milky and wild, and broke into white surf at the base of the rocky island near the entrance.

The girl's thoughts were not following her eyes. They were farther away than the white tossing bay and surf-encircled island, farther away than the ocean which merged its limitless blue into the as blue horizon that arched it, farther away than all these, and back to the little village of Saxenhausen which clustered about the bridge that spanned the Mayne in Frankfort, her native land.

They were fair promises indeed that the Lords Commissioner of Trade and Plantations had set forth to induce the sturdy German and Swiss families to settle in this new colony of Nova Scotia. "To each foreigner fifty acres of land free from all rent or taxes for ten years. To each member of the families ten additional acres. Housekeeping implements, implements for clearing their land and erecting their habitation, and maintenance for a twelvemonth." In all the populous towns of Germany the Proclamation was set up, and from the little village of Saxenhausen fifty-seven accepted its offers.

Ulrica Owenslaugen was an orphan. Her uncle's family with whom she lived were among the fifty-seven. For a six-year Ulrica had been betrothed to Conrad Ludovic, a poor sick lad, hardly able to earn clothing and food from the images of white wood which he carved for the fairs on Saints days. When the Proclamation was set up on the Saxenhausen bridge Conrad was among the number who were flushed with hope at the new life offered. All of the days and far into the night he carved at his white wood, and doubled the usual supply, that he might get the money for the passage. But the stress was too much for his weak constitution, and in two months he was prostrated with sickness, the returns for his sales scarcely paying those who cared for him.

It was then that the girl's stubborn purpose was born. She would herself take up the land for which Conrad had bargained!

As member of her uncle's family ten acres would be hers in her own right, and her own

passage was secure. Why should she not? Many a day had she worked with her uncle in fashioning the ship's knees and timbers, and could swing the mallet like a man, he had often told her. In two years or less she could have the house built and land tilled. And with what Conrad could himself earn in this time she could raise money enough to send for the passage out.

It was a bold resolve, and one which the emigrants would have discouraged her from entertaining had she told them. But only to her lover did she confide it, and though he had at first objected, her hope and confidence was so bright that he at length came to believe in it, and save for the humiliating thought that she must do what should have been his work he did not oppose her.

All that first winter after their arrival the emigrants remained in Halifax, helping fashion the frames of the wooden houses which were being fast erected in the new city; and many a six-

pence did Ulrica's handiness and strength add to the little hoard she was so rigidly saving. When May came there had enough settlers arrived to form the new township, and on the seventh of June nearly fifteen hundred German and Swiss landed on the shore of Merleguish Bay, the spot selected by General Hopson for the site of the town.

There was much discouragement for them. Not a tree from the hill had been felled. The whole of the coast was rocky and wild. And the thick evergreen forest, overgrown with underbrush harder to remove than the giant trees themselves, was an appalling sight to these people so recently removed from a highly cultivated and populous country, whose vast forests of oak and beech spread mile upon mile of clear, brown ground clean as a grove.

Ulrica shared the general disappointment, and in addition to this was refused the fifty acres on which she had so hopefully planned. Her ten acres, however, proved to be a town

lot, and on this her small house was erected, and finished long before any other in the Settlement, for several youths of the party with the secret hope that they might themselves some day share the benefit of their labors, worked at slabbing and banking it. In the same way her land was cut and cleared sooner than her neighbors, and a thrifty growth of flax and turnips and barley now grew upon it.

But in spite of all this prosperity she had been unable to raise the passage-money, and Conrad was still in the German land. Though all the past winter she had worked hard at the staves and barrels the settlers sent to Halifax, the money in return did not make up the required sum, and as she sat there on this late afternoon and thought it all over, her great stout heart was heavy within her. A new lot of settlers had arrived that morning and in the ship came a letter from Ludovic. He was weaker, and the tone was no longer hopeful, for in it he bade her a farewell.

The girl was full of despair. When the ship arrived again in Germany it was to return to the new colony but once more, and that would be the last chance for his coming.

A sharp "halloo!" broke in upon her reverie, and turning quickly she saw a man approaching the Settlement over the cleared ground between the inclosure and the forest.

He was not one of the settlers, but was evidently acquainted with the way, for he made no detour from the opening in the picket defense, but came straight toward it, and making his entrance walked quickly across the garden plot and up to where the girl stood.

His rough clothes were torn, and from his shoulder swung a narrow axe. One glance at his careless, good-natured face freed her from alarm, and when he spoke in her native tongue the girl readily recognized him. He had come out with the settlers from Germany, and accompanied them to Lunenburg, but after a few weeks had disappeared.

Ulrica had never spoken with him, but knew his name was Jake Steignford, and the familiar speech and honest, careless face swept aside all barriers; and in answer to his request for food she at once led him into the little kitchen and set about her preparation for supper.

"Get the food quick as possible, Fräulein!" said the man as he seated himself wearily on the wooden bench. "For when it is eaten and I have milked your cow for pay, I am off down the Settlement. I have news to tell."

And then to her wondering ears he detailed the story of the expulsion of the French. He had been with these people at Minas and at Port Royal for a twelvemonth, and was in the vicinity of Minas when they were taken from there. His foreign speech had protected him, but not an incident of the tragedy had escaped him.

"The buildings, barns and houses were fired and burned to the ground," he said. "Not one is standing. But the cattle and horses and

sheep by thousands yet feed on the grand meadows. It is for that I have come here. By to-morrow's sunset I can raise a party of men, and we can bring back hundreds of the cattle. It will be a fortune for those who are bold enough to try it. And unless there is haste the English will have them without paying for them; but there is time yet; only last night I left them feeding by the thousands."

The girl stared as he spoke the last words.

"Only last night," she repeated. "How were you brought?"

The man glanced good-humoredly down at his thick-clad feet.

"They brought me," he said.

"But the mountains; they say there are mountains between here and the French country!"

"Mountains have been climbed," said the man.

"And the river that is rough and deep, and the thick forest!" said the girl.

"All rivers do not run across the course,"

replied the man, "and trails have been blazed through the deepest forests."

And pointing to his axe, he added: "The blazings this blade cut as I came are thick as the trees on which I made them. I have crossed more forests than you are years old, Fräulein, and could always return the way I went. The sundown is hardly here yet, and last sundown I left the other end of the trail, forty miles away."

"But the way would be rough for the men who are not used like you to the forests," said the girl.

"*Ya;* the way is rough, but the Germans' legs are strong as their hearts," said the man, with a meaning laugh, for he knew the reason of her coming to the new land.

Ulrica did not reply to the raillery, but as she placed the supper on the table the words repeated themselves in her mind, and she said them to herself:

"The Germans' legs are strong as their

hearts. Good! And their hearts are strong and true, that I know!"

"Now, bring up your cow, Fräulein," said the man, as he sat down to the food. "Tush! but you should see the herds that feed in the valley. Why, in a small meadow not a mile from the woods of the slope there are a dozen or more red and white creatures, tame as your own. There is no reason why we should not bring back a few hundred."

The girl went out of the house and down the pathway to the end of the ten acres where a small fenced bit of land pastured her one cow.

She was gone much longer than usual, and when she returned the man had left. By the plate was a small piece of money.

Taking up the pail from the bench, she went out into the penthouse where the cow stood. When she had finished milking she took the rope fastened to the stanchion, and coiling it closely, tied it tightly up in a kerchief which hung from her bodice.

Then she went back into the kitchen, and from a chest that stood by the bed took a bundle of old linen rags and a small lump of fresh tallow. Opening the kerchief she put these in with the rope, and adding half a loaf of barley bread tied it tightly up again, and started away from the house across the garden lot, and out through the picket inclosure by which Jake Steignford had made his entrance a few hours before.

When she reached the verge of the forest she sat down, and removing her thick wooden shoes, greased the soles of her feet and wrapped the soft linen rags about them under the coarse stockings. This done, she started into the thick woods.

She was bound for the meadows of Mines, to bring back some cows to sell, and raise the money for the passage-pass!

The first of her way lay through a dense forest of yellow pines; the underbrush was scanty and the footing easy and free from obstruction.

The blazings on the trees were not far apart and in the bright moonlight she could plainly see them.

Then the trail struck the Gold River, a wild and rocky-bedded stream, dashing its water to foam in incessant leaps and whirls. For many miles she followed it, and the full moon lighting its white foaming water made her way easy to trace.

At last she began to slowly descend the mountain. Up, and over, and down the great blue hills, covered with hard wood trees of birch and oak, and dense so that they almost touched each other.

It was in these deep woods, not ten miles from the Grand Pré, that her courage first forsook her. There was a silence through them that seemed ominous, after the sighing and tossing of the pine-tops. And as the soft plumage of an owl in its noiseless flight brushed against her face she started, and made a sudden outcry.

The cry echoed and re-echoed, and in

strangely varied and weird tones was repeated, till the girl was filled with terror, and sank to her knees on the brown leaves which already lay thick on the ground.

For the first time she thought of what she had undertaken, and the danger and daring of it appalled her. All the possible perils of the way rushed to her mind — the savage Indians, the as savage wild beasts, and the danger of missing her trail in this deep dark forest out of which she could never hope to find her way unguided.

And then came a new horror. In her sudden fright she had lost sight of the blazings!

Never once before through all the night had she allowed her eyes to leave the last till they caught the gleam of the next, but in her alarm she had forgotten and removed them from the guiding line.

With tensioned sight she peered into the shadowy depths around her, but no answering gleam met her searching gaze. She buried her

face in her hands, and then with rested vision strained out into the surrounding gloom — to right, to left, behind, and ahead — but in vain.

It did not occur to her fear-benumbed senses that with the daylight she could easily again find the blazings. She forgot everything but the one terrifying thought that she was alone in the great woods and lost. Closing her eyes she leaned back against the great tree under which she sat and yielded to her fears. But as her face touched the tree something rough on the smooth bark scratched her cheek, and putting up her hand to seek the cause she found it to be the blazing. In her terror she had not thought of seeking it on the tree under which she rested.

In dumb joy she sprang to her feet. Her courage returned. And keeping the white chippings well watched she set out again on her way.

It was late afternoon when she emerged from the forest into the cultivated fields of what a

few days before was the quiet picturesque village of Grand Pré, with its hundreds of happy homes and contented peasantry.

Ulrica looked eagerly in the fields near by for the cattle Jake Steigniford had told of, but the blazing fires and military clamor had alarmed them, and they had stampeded to the great open meadow some miles farther down. One look at the great herd was sufficient to dispel her vision of driving or leading home half a dozen of them, or of even venturing among them to select but one. On a closer look, however, she saw in a little picketed inclosure not many yards distant, a large handsome cow feeding quietly on a patch of well-cultivated cabbages.

Ulrica recognized at once that this animal was a full-blooded Alderney, such as she had seen in her native land, on the great farms of the Barons. The cow had been imported by one of the wealthy farmers. Firearms and soldiers were to her familiar sights and sounds,

and this was why she had not been alarmed and fled to the meadow.

Satisfied that she could not easily break loose from the inclosure, and gaining the creature's good-will by a few kind strokes, Ulrica looked about her for a place of rest. A fear of being discovered, and a naturally morbid desire to look upon the reminders of human suffering, led her to a cellar near by, and going down into it, she seated herself on the lowest stone step and took from her kerchief the barley bread, which until now she had not touched. The bottom of the cellar was covered with ashes and brands. In the middle stood the chimney, built square and large, from the ground to the floor of what had been a farmhouse. Once in the cellar, shut out from surrounding sights, and the soothing effects of satisfied appetite coming over her senses, the tired girl fell asleep.

When she awoke the morning sun was an hour high. Half-dazed with a returning sense of her situation she tried to distinguish the reality

from a strange dream that seemed a part of her surroundings.

The last object she remembered seeing before going to sleep was a very red brick in the wall of the chimney in front of her. When she waked her eyes were on this brick, and in her mind was a recollection of having pulled it out of its place and found money behind it.

The trackless ashes on the cellar bottom assured her that she had not been to the chimney; but the red brick was there, and now with returning senses seemed to be not as secure in the wall as the others about it. Rousing all her courage she walked through the ashes and placed her hand upon it, and to her great astonishment found it loose. Picking it from its place she removed it, and behind it were bright gold coins.

It was some minutes before she could so far master herself as to touch them. Then, almost frightened at herself, she took them from their hiding place and counted them. There were

A MUFFLED NOTE OF WONDER BURST FROM EVERY MAN.

twenty in number, but of how much value she did not know.

Reasoning that the owner was on the seas, probably never to return, she wrapped them in her kerchief and pinned it securely in the folds of her dress-waist. And then frightened at all the strangeness of her adventure, and eager to get away from the place, the girl climbed up into the open air again and looked about her for the cow. It was still in the inclosure. Willingly the great sleek creature followed the trend of the rope which Ulrica tied about her horns; and — refreshed from her long rest — the resolute girl started out through the forest again.

Two hours before this the party of men started from the Settlement. Jake Steignford had roused their cupidity, and fifty of them followed him on the doubtfully righteous expedition. All through the day they traveled, and about midnight they were preparing to halt

and rest until dawn, when one of the men who had gone ahead of the others returned excitedly.

"Listen!" he said.

All were silent, expecting to hear the approach of some wild beast.

"It is a bird singing," said one of the men, breaking the silence.

"It is no bird," said Jake Steignford. "It is the little brazed bell the Acadians fasten on the necks of their cattle."

"But the French pastures are twenty miles away, man!" said half a dozen voices. "And though we have heard the signal gun from the citadel at Halifax three times as far, it is a devil's wind that can carry the sound of the cow-bell through twenty miles of forest."

"It is a French bell," said Jake, "and I am going to overhaul it even if it should be on the neck of a witch."

And leading the way he started on in the direction of the sound.

After nearly an hour's traveling the mellow tinkling on the still night air grew nearer, and more than one stout German heart began to feel the effect of nursery education in the Fatherland. Jake Steignford, however, was firm in his expressed opinion.

Nearer came the tinkling, and nearer, and then a muffled note of wonder burst from the throat of every man as they came upon the cause of the sound and saw in the moonlit forest the great sleek cow, and leading it Ulrica Owenslaugen.

For an instant no one spoke. Then the men comprehended her deed, and a murmur of applause burst from their lips, breaking into a cheer loud and long as the girl told them her adventures.

Of the gold she did not speak. They gave her food and drink, and a little after dawn she set out again on her way, and the men resumed their march.

In the bustle of getting the party off for the

cattle forage, Ulrica had not been missed from the Settlement, and there was much excitement when late in the afternoon she appeared, leading the fine cow.

The next morning she hesitatingly handed the captain of the ship four of the gold coins to pay the passage of Conrad.

"Spanish doubloons"! said the captain, eying the girl closely, and giving her back a handful of silver in change, and two of the gold pieces. This was the first idea she had of their value.

The month of May brought Conrad, much improved in health from the voyage out. And in the little new church of Saint John he and Ulrica were married.

The small cabin was soon changed for the best house in the town, planned and built by Conrad himself.

To this day farmers in the county of Lunenburg trace back the pedigree of their best cows to this French prize of Ulrica's. The little bells that are the pride of every yoke of fine oxen in

the county are made after the pattern of the one that tinkled so mysteriously in the forest more than a hundred years ago. And some of the richest families are not ashamed to trace their genealogical tree back to a peasant girl with gold coins pinned in her dress.

V.

THE INDIAN GUARDIAN.

THE ninth of May, 1745.

Already there was grass over the salt marshes and green leaves on the earlier forest trees around the Acadian Settlement at L'Equille. The winter had been mild. For weeks the wind had blown from the southwest, clearing the ice from the Equille and Allen Rivers, and glinting into summer blue the broad beautiful Bason into which these sinuous streams emptied.

But the French inhabitants at L'Equille found no presage of comfort in the elements, nor harbingers of better times in mild winter and early spring. Louisburg, the only fortified place in Acadie held by their countrymen, was besieged by the Massachusetts Bay Colonists, and the

emissaries of the French king had commanded them to furnish food and munitions of war to aid in the defense, menacing them with the destruction of their homes if they refused. The English, to whom the country now belonged, threatened with death or exile any who gave this aid. And bound further by the oath of fidelity which every man in the Banlieûe had been forced to take, these rural people, thus conquered, commanded and threatened on all sides by their fellow men, were filled with unrest of purpose and bitterness of spirit.

The only man among them who dared respond to the call of his countrymen was Jean Terriot, the hunter, hated by every man in the Banlieûe; and there was much excitement when it became known that he would join Marin's party.

On this morning of the 9th a group of the inhabitants stood on the Equille Bridge, idly watching, as they talked, a canoe rapidly paddled up the tortuous stream. Their talk was of Jean Terriot.

"He goes on the morrow, I hear," said the Padre.

"And leaves few to mourn or miss his loss if he never returns," added Pierre Gascon.

"But he has been earnest in raising men to aid our countrymen," said the Padre, who did not share in the hatred of the hunter. "I hear that four hundred of our people in other parts of the Province and many Indians accompany him: two sloops, two schooners and sixty large canoes embark from Port Royal."

"For all that, we like not this same Jean Terriot," put in Gascon again. "Neither French, English nor Indians can trust him; he knows too much of the affairs of each for any one of them to rely upon him. A good-for-nothing. His English wife was no help to him, and it was a wonder he found so pretty a maiden to call him husband; but no wonder that she died at the end of a year. Where he will quarter his child while away, I do not know; it is a girl and but two years old."

"Ask him," said another of the men, "for yonder he comes!"

"'Tis little he will tell you," said Gascon, as the canoe came around the broad bend and its occupant was recognized as Jean Terriot. And raising his voice the speaker added in harsh tones: "Men who shun prisons and carry evil secrets do not talk much, nor hear any good of themselves!"

The man kneeling on the folded skins in the bottom of the canoe must have heard these sneering words, but he gave no heed to them or to the group of men who looked steadily down upon him as the little craft shot under the Bridge and out again beyond their sight amid the windings of the river.

As the canoe turned the first curve he leaned forward, and drawing aside a pile of furs in front of him, disclosed a sweet mite of a child sleeping beneath; and the hard and haughty look on his face changed to one of infinite tenderness as he gently passed his hand over the

golden curls which showed the Saxon blood of the mother who had died on the day of its birth.

Up the river, in and out, around the endless flexures the canoe sped, and a mile beyond the Horseshoe Curve, where dense forests lined the shores and rocks impeded navigation, stopped.

Stepping out on the shore the man took the child and placed it on the trunk of a fallen tree, lifted the canoe from the water and stood it behind the tree, then raised the child in his arms and started on through the forest. He walked with rapid tread and soon came upon a well-beaten path that led to a clearing where many wigwams were built in the order of an Indian encampment.

Without a word or even a nod of recognition to the Indians who lounged about the trees, he went straight on to a taller wigwam farther removed from the others, and pushing aside the boughs that partly shielded the doorway, stepped in.

A light came into the silent taciturn face of the Indian who sat with crossed feet before the fire, and with an eager gesture of welcome he pointed with a wave of his hand to a higher part of the camp.

But the Frenchman did not speak, or notice in any way the salutation. He set the child down by the fire, and turned around and stood in the doorway of the wigwam. For many minutes he stood thus. Then he went in and sat down by the Indian who in all this time had known so well how to be silent while another suffered.

"Massaosit," said the Frenchman, "you know M. Marin. You may not know though that Duchambou has sent to him begging help in his great strait, for the English have besieged the French fortress. Marin is taking many men, taking your own people and mine, taking me. I have no friends — I like the Frenchmen at the Settlement not at all, I like the English less. But the child — how can I take it, yet

how can I leave it or live without it? I care not to let it be with the settlers; they will say nought but bad of me, and the only being who loves me shall not be taught to hate me. You are my friend, though — if you can say nothing good you can at least be silent; will you take it? I have no knowledge when I will return; it may be one year, two years."

There was a moment of silence, and then the Indian spoke.

"Massaosit will take it," he said. "Shall he say no, when his friend ask of him? the Frenchman save the Indian from drowning once."

"You promise fair," said the Frenchman; "so do the English, yet they break their promises."

"This tree, English!" said the Indian, pointing through the doorway to the bare boughs of a birch-tree. "See, green in summer, it look fair and you not know, you think it last forever — five moons, and it fades, six moons and again it comes — that is English, always making,

always breaking. Indian is fir, spruce, hemlock — once so, always so. I say I take it, I take it — twelve moons, many twelve moons, you come back and you find it. That is all I say — I have said."

"It is all I ask," said the Frenchman, and he bent for a moment over the child, then went out of the wigwam and down to the shore where the canoe lay.

In silence the Indian accompanied him, launched his canoe, gave him the paddle and waited to watch him out of sight.

There were no more words spoken, no more charges given, no farewell between these two so widely different in race, so strangely alike in life and character. Alone, in the silence and coming night, on the verge of the grand old forest untouched by the devastating axe of civilization, the Indian stood, watching the rapidly receding canoe as it floated with the tide down the winding river. And not till it disappeared around the Horseshoe Curve above the Bridge

did he turn into the forest, silent and stately as the giant trees among which he wended his way back to the wigwam where lay the sleeping child so trustingly placed under such strange guardianship.

1756, and again it was May.

The "twelve moons," the "many twelve moons" had passed; no word had come from the Frenchman. Since the day eleven years ago, when the two sloops, the two schooners and the sixty large canoes sailed out between the precipitous looming hills on either side of St. George's Channel, there had been no tidings of him. From the Indians about the Fort, Massaosit picked up the news of the fall of Louisburg. From the few who straggled back from Marin's party he learned that the fleet had been met at Cape Sable and chased by armed Provincials, met again in Ascomouse harbor and forced to land to escape capture, reaching Louisburg in July, only to find the

Island Battery beaten down and the fortress in possession of the hated English. Of Jean Terriot, nothing could be heard.

But into the harbor of Port Royal on this May morning of 1756, a great ship sailed; moving majestically and slowly with the lazy wind and nearly spent tide, up the placid sun-lit sheet of blue ocean water; a large ship, with storm-beaten sails, and the British flag flying at her mast head. She was not expected, and no one knew why or whence she came except as the flag indicated her nationality.

With lively interest the people watched and guessed, and hoped, and feared, till the mooring ground was reached, and a boat put off for the shore.

Among those who landed in this boat was a tall, richly dressed man, who seemed not to be a stranger, but was recognized by no one as he walked rapidly through the street with the step of one who treads familiar ground. He drew the attention of the people, but took no notice

of them, calmly pursuing his way through the town and out on the road that led to L'Equille.

There were now no loiterers on the Bridge to conjecture as to his name or errand. Here, as at Chignecto and Minas, the mandate of tyrannical necessity had been well obeyed, and from every hamlet and field the helpless Acadians driven over the seas or into the forest.

Without pausing to look about him, the stranger kept straight on till he reached the rapids, then throwing off his cloak he dashed into the forest with the long stealthy step of the Indian and hunter, and the confidence of a man who knows where he is going.

The trail led direct to the clearing where the Indian encampment had been, but there was no sound of human life about, no sight of human being, and the smoke from only one wigwam fire curled up through the green trees.

At the entrance of this wigwam the stranger uttered the Micmac salutation, but not waiting for answer stepped inside and stood before the

THE CHILD SPRANG TO MASSAOSIT'S SIDE.

Indian who sat in the center of the camp, on a bed of boughs.

A dark scowl of suspicion came over the face of the Indian, then his keen glance penetrated the genteel dress of the intruder and recognized his friend Jean Terriot. Without rising, or laying aside his work, he said :

"Massaosit's long-gone friend welcome back," and with a silent gesture pointed to the rear of the camp where stood the child, now grown to the verge of girlhood.

Stepping eagerly forward, the Frenchman gathered her in his arms and lifted her to his breast.

When he turned around again, the Indian was sitting back to him, gazing steadily into the fire, as if from out its blazing coals could come the courage needed to make him keep his word and give up the child now dear to his heart.

The Frenchman sat down beside him and with trembling lips thanked him for his trust; told him of the voyage to Louisburg, of his transportation with the French of that city to

New England, and thence to Rochelle ; of the eight years' struggle for bread and life, and of the hunger of heart all this time for a sight of the child. Then he told of the fortune that finally came to him, enabling him to command the captain of a ship to Boston to sail into Port Royal. As he ceased speaking, with lavish generosity he emptied a leathern pouch of gold on the ground at the Indian's feet.

Slowly the Indian picked the glittering pieces up, held each separate one in his dusky hand, and with each look at the gold glanced across at the child who sat with troubled eyes on the ground between the two men. One by one he dropped the pieces into the pouch, held it for a moment before him, then leaned forward and laid it on the Frenchman's knee.

"Massaosit need no gold, want none," he said. "He had pay every day better than gold. Every sunset, every sunrise he has looked for his friend — now he has come there will be empty camp, no shining hair, no bright

eyes, no pretty voice" — and stretching out his arms toward the child he uttered a wild wail like a bereaved mother.

The child sprang to his side, and with tender words in his own tongue soothed him as she laid her soft cheek against his swarthy face and her small hands upon his brow.

For a long time the three sat thus and talked together.

With eager interest the Frenchman listened while the Indian told him of the terrible disorder that broke out among the Indians of Isle Royal the year of the taking of Louisburg, heaping the burial mounds of their fathers high with its victims; how it spread from the Isle to the Province and swept away hundreds, coming at last to the encampment at L'Equille and leaving every wigwam but Massaosit's empty of life. Into his dwelling the evil spirits of disease did not enter, and laying his hand on the child's head he said solemnly, "The bright eyes, the pretty voice kept them off."

With earnest words the Frenchman urged the old Indian to leave the lonely spot and go with them to France, but he would not heed their persuasions; nor would he accept gift or pay for his long care and trust.

Sunset came, and the three started out from the wigwam, along the same path the two had trodden so many years ago. And as then in silence they parted, so now not a word broke the silent gloom about, as the Indian launched them his own canoe, gently lifted the little maiden into it, bent and kissed the "shining hair" and then turned with slow steps into the black forest.

Three days the Frenchman delayed the sailing, and each day went up the river, again to urge the Indian to accompany them to France, but found only a deserted camp and no trace of its inmate.

Then the ship could wait no longer, and on the evening of the third day set sail for France. And the Frenchman never knew that a single

canoe came down the river to watch it leave, following far behind in the wake of the white trail of surf, till forced by the waves to return.

A pouch of gold was left in trusty hands at Port Royal, that the Indian need never want while he lived; and in the autumn came rich furs and broidered blancoating. He never saw them. For when the hunting moon was a slender silver horn Massaosit was gathered to his fathers, stricken with the same deadly malady that had carried his people off years before.

VI.

THE PRIVATEER OF HALL'S HARBOR.

ON the southern coast of the Bay of Fundy, about ten miles down the shore from the lofty promontory of Cape Split, there is a sudden slope of the mural cliffs of trap. In this declivity is a narrow, vault-like opening extending, with but slight interruption, from the shore of the Bay, through the mountain range, to the fertile valley at the south. Midway up this vault a brook, fed by perennial springs, flows down a rocky channel to the waters of the Bay. As it nears the seaward end of the gorge its bed becomes more nearly level and the water widens into a creek up which the tide flows, making at high water a safe shelter for small craft.

In the early morning of May 30, 1813, there

was anchored at the entrance of this creek a small vessel, and on an escarpment of the cliff that banked the brook on the west side stood seven men. They were not fishermen, nor was the vessel a fishing craft.

The lonely boundless beauty of the blue Bay, the purple mystery of the opposite heights, the rugged peaks of Chignecto and D'Or lifting their crests above the gleaming wave, and flashing ruddy tints along their sun-bathed slopes, was no new or wonderful sight to these men who were the captain and crew of the trim cutter-like craft. Three times in the previous year had they moored the cutter outside the little creek. Three times had they slept on the escarpment of the cliff, and each time had they threaded that rocky vault through the wooded mountain and reached the fertile valley beyond.

They were in no haste this spring morning. The longest trail to the valley could be covered in four hours, and they had no wish to reach it until nightfall.

Six of these men were middle-aged, strong and burly of build. The other was a youth of about eighteen, slight, and tall, and dark of face. Without bidding, this lad started a fire among some smoke-stained stones in a sheltered slope of the cliff. When he had done this he spoke for a moment with the captain, and then descended the rocky slope to the creek where a boat was hauled up on the shore. This boat he launched, and rowed down the brook and out to the cutter, boarded her, and returned with a pail and some empty bags. The pail he filled with fresh water from the foaming mountain stream, then, going to where the men were, he threw the bags on the ground.

"They light easy," said one of the men.

"And they carry easier than they'll carry this time to-morrow," said the youth with a laugh.

"Get the water heated, and be off on your hunt before the sun gets higher," interrupted the captain.

"Aye, I'll be off in time," said the lad, lac-

ing to his ankles a pair of stout buskins he had brought from the vessel.

"No fear but he'll be willing to be off," said another of the men. "His heart will outrun them buskined legs, I'll be bound. The table-land holds a prize he is anxious to capture."

The youth's brown face flushed red, but he made no reply.

"Aye, he'll find the land all right," said the captain. "Six months make little change in a piece of ground; but girls and table-lands are not alike that way, lad, so don't set your heart too strong on seeing her as you left her last."

The lad was busy about the food and took little notice of the jesting. In half an hour the breakfast was through with, and he started away.

"It's the straightest road we want, youngster," called the captain, as he rounded the bend of the vault; "the straightest road and the fullest barns and shops. Don't venture farther down than the table-land, and remember to promise the redskins half the booty — a half promised

is a quarter given, and that *Mary Jane* of ours can sail away from a hundred promises if her cabin be full of booty."

It was a few hours past mid-day when the youth returned. He found the men anxiously waiting his arrival.

"The way is clear," he said; "we are favored as we always have been. The houses are left unprotected to-night — most of the men are down to the river mending the dykes, and they are going to camp on the spot. The Indians are as easy to buy as tobacco. There are only three camps where there were a dozen last year, and but three grown men and some boys about them."

"Go on," said the men; "tell us about the maiden. Are her eyes as yellow and her teeth as white as last year, or was she smiling on a brave of her own tribe?"

"She was not there," replied the youth. "She was off to the valley, they said."

"Did you leave your trinket?" asked one of the men.

The lad looked angrily at him. "What trinket do you mean?" he asked.

"Tush, lad!" said the captain, "a jest is but a jest; and we have been young ourselves not so many years ago that our eyes were not yet sharp enough to see you buy the trinket last week; and you sleep so sound you did not know it slipped from your waistcoat. I dare say the sight of it brought the Indians round so easy; last trip they were hard enough to coax. But never mind the girl now, we have our hours counted and need to be alert. How many did you say there were in the camps, lad?"

"Three, and the boys; they will go with you and lead you to the richest plunder — they say there are fifty hams in the Squire's smoke-house."

The youth was to be left behind to guard the vessel and the boat. He preferred being left, though he did not say so. It was not more than

a year since he had joined the crew of the *Mary Jane.* He did his part bravely and heartily when required, but at each trip to the creek he had been left to guard the vessel. The rest of the men wondered a little that he should be kept from all four raids. The captain had his reasons for this treatment; there were people in the valley the lad did not care to meet, even in the night. Captain Hall knew this — and knew too more of the fertile valley than the Indians who under pretext of guides had been secured as allies; but he did not speak of it.

"Keep more than half you know to yourself," he said when he engaged the youth, "and don't let what's left of the other half slip out of your reach. These are times of war, and words are sometimes more dangerous than swords."

There was a weightier reason for staying this time than there had ever been before. In the cabin of the cutter was a strong box. Their last sea-prize had been a rich one, and in the strong box was two thousand dollars.

Just before they started up the vault the captain rowed across to the cutter and brought back with him the treasure.

"Here, lad," he said, "*Mary Jane* thinks it's too much risk for her, considering the sudden squalls that haunt this Bay. Put it in some kind of a hole in the ledge till we are back, and once we're safe in port again there'll be some dividing as will make your eyes bulge — think of that for company while we're off!"

The youth had not been gone two hours from the encampment on the table-land, when the Indian girl returned. This table-land was a shelf-like projection that made out from the mountain on the valley side, closed from sight toward the valley, but open toward the mountain. For years there had been a considerable encampment of Indians at the place; the little brook at the foot of the mountain furnished them fish, the stretches of beech woods game and nuts. But late years both game and fish were

failing, and most of their number had moved farther up the valley. The others were going soon, but for one reason and another the moving had been delayed.

The Indian girl was glad of the delay. On each occasion of the other raids of the robbers the youth had visited the table-land, and each time he had smiled on and talked with the girl. The last trip he had given her a bright coin and told her to wait until spring and he would bring her a chain to hang it on. In her wild, untaught way she remembered and kept faith in the promise. When she returned this day from her valley tramp, she was met with the news of the white man's coming ; and less welcome news than that she unwillingly heard. Her people had turned traitor to the robbers. On each of the other expeditions they had guided and assisted them, and for each service had received a reward. But the white settlers of the valley offered larger rewards. Thrice had their houses and stores been broken into, and not a night but they lived

in terror of another raid. By some means they discovered that the Indians at the encampment had been allies and guides, and not daring to threaten, they coaxed and bribed the redskins to acquaint them of the approach of the robbers should they again visit the valley. Promises of corn and flour in abundance, prevailed. Meantime a company had been formed and armed, to fight, and preparations made so that with an hour's notice the men could be gathered and ready for duty.

The girl had not been acquainted with the turn of affairs, and knew nothing of it until her return from the valley this spring day. They gave her the trinket the youth had left — a shell necklet of East India make. When she had clasped it about her dusky throat and hung upon it the glittering coin, they told her of their plans and of the promise they had made the settlers, and that she must retrace her steps to the nearest house to warn them. They must be warned in time, for they had planned not to attack the

robbers in the valley, but to allow them to secure their plunder unmolested and return with it to the shore. Meanwhile the armed men were to march up the mountain and follow the trail to the cove, where they would lie in ambush and wait their return. They would be weary, and careless of attack, and easily conquered and captured, and the settlers could then search the vessel and take from it whatever booty might be of most value to them.

All this the Indians made known to the girl, and ordered her on her errand.

Quietly, but sullenly, she started away from the camps, her heart beating a protest to the treachery. The robbers were coarse hard men, she cared nothing for them, but the red-cheeked youth would be in their number and killed with the others.

From two places on her journey she could be seen from the camps, and she well knew her unwillingness to go had been noticed, and that keen eyes would be strained for a sight of her

in these cleared spots. More than that, they had timed her, and set her return to an hour after sundown. Powerless to evade the errand the dark-skinned messenger pursued with unwilling feet the well-worn trail to the white men's habitations.

At the first cleared spot she looked back; she saw no one of her people, but knew she was seen by them. On she went again, down now on the edge of the fertile valley, across the little brook in the meadow, and out again to the second clearing. On from that, and but half a mile to the house of the Squire.

Once there her errand was soon told, and a messenger started away for the dykes. A new thought entered the heart of the agile girl. If she reached the camp before the robbers came she might in some way let them know of the treachery of her people. The thought was like wings to her feet, and she took the trail back with double the speed of her coming, and long before she was expected, reached the table-land.

The robbers had not yet arrived.

An hour or more after sundown they came. The Indians welcomed them as they had always done; and for a while they rested and talked of the probabilities of the booty and the share that would fall to their allies. No suspicion of the treachery was in the taciturn faces of the Indians, and no thought of it entered the minds of the robbers. Three times had their raids been successful, and again fortune and night seemed in their favor. The men were away from the houses, the night would be dark until twelve, and after that the moon would rise and light their return journey to the shore.

The girl supposed the lad would be with the men and that she could speak with him, but as she listened to their talk she heard them tell that he had been left behind to guard the vessel. She had been with the settlers much of her time and understood English readily, so could follow the men as they told of the way they took; now down in the vault, now up on the mountain side,

down again by the brink of the brook, and straight from that to the slope of the cliff where the youth kept watch. She knew that by early dawn there would meet him men, armed and ready to torture and slay. She slipped away from the opening where she had been listening, and back into her camp, and with one hand clasping the necklet lay down with the children who were already asleep. Her quick brain had formed a purpose.

When the waning moon shone above the beech grove to the east, the girl arose and crept from the camp. The robbers and their treacherous allies had long been gone. The squaws and children were sleeping. There were no lights in the valley below. The robbers must be through their plundering and soon would be starting on the return tramp.

By another trail the armed men must now be creeping up and over the mountain side. There was a trail on the east and one on the west side

the gulch; which way they had taken the girl did not know, but she knew they must be an hour ahead of her, and if she was to reach the cove before them her feet must make no tarrying. Already she was weary from her long tramp to the settlement, but lithe of limb and persistent of purpose she started forth, entered the beech woods, crossed the head of the gorge, and took the western trail.

Ahead of her, ascending the brow of the mountain, was the company of armed men. The way was new to them, they were slow in making it, they lost time. It was new to the girl; but she was not slow, and she lost no time. The moon was unclouded; native instinct guided her moccasined feet over the rough ground, and with her heart full of the purpose to save the life of the white lad who kept watch on the cliff by the shore of the Great Water, she pressed forward.

On went the armed men. Fast behind came the fleet feet of the maiden. Behind her the

rough robbers laden with plunder, and behind them the treacherous Indians, intent on getting a double share of booty. All journeying to the same point, each inspired with a different purpose.

On through the forest in the quiet night went this strange procession. The armed men ahead and descending the vault, gaining rapidly upon them the brave girl, and following fast on her steps the robbers.

On hastened the armed men. They did not know their blunder: the youth, the Indian maiden and the robbers were on the west side the gorge, they had taken the east. And as it neared the shore the vault became deeper and the mountain stream grew wide and washed high against its steep rocky banks.

When morning began to dawn a low belt of fog skirted the Bay. The lofty promontories assumed fantastic shapes. The islands presented a delusive appearance. The white mist

parted them, banked them, tipped them, blent their jagged peaks with the sky. Slowly the grayness thickened into a dull fog; the opposite shore, the bold headlands, the islands and finally the blue waters of the vast Bay were lost to view.

At the first gleam of daylight the young man had rowed down the creek and boarded the vessel. A light breeze was springing up from the east; it was the breeze they needed to take them down the Bay. Knowing this, and that the captain would sail as soon as he could get his plunder on board, the lad loosened the sails, and as far as could be done made ready to weigh anchor.

The ever-lurking Bay fog was fast gathering over the shore, and by the time he had reached his outlook on the cliff, it had penetrated the woods and wrapped its gray drapery about the tall green pines, and lay like a great bank over the creek and against the steep sides of the rocky gorge.

Not a rod could his sight pierce its damp density. Walled in on every side he waited the return of the robbers. Soon the sound of voices at a distance fell upon his quick ear and he sent a shrill whistle into the dull mist. It was not answered. The voices sounded nearer, and came from the east side the gorge. He was puzzled — the robbers never went or came by that trail; but again he gave the signal whistle and listened for reply.

Directly there came through the mediumistic mist the sharp click-click of the cocking of guns. At the same instant, out of the gray obscurity above him rushed the Indian maiden, with her long black hair tangled about her round neck and brown oval face. Panting for breath, and nearly exhausted, she did not speak, but pointed across the creek whence the sounds had come, and down to the boat on the little beach.

Vaguely the lad interpreted her wild gestures, and seizing the mute girl in his strong arms descended the cliff, and placing her in the boat,

shoved off from the shore. The report of a musket came from the direction of the voices and the bullet struck the water near them.

Believing now that the girl was for some reason being hunted, and fearing to locate the boat by any noise, he allowed it to drift with the outgoing tide. The fog was their only protection; each understood this, and neither ventured a word till the rushing waves had borne them out of range of the guns. Then the girl brokenly told the lad who the men were on the east bank and why they were there.

Quickly he comprehended the situation, and with the impetuosity of boyhood seized the oars and rowed rapidly toward a rocky point at the entrance to the creek. It was in that bank he had laid the strong box, and he must secure it at any peril. The noise of the rowing located the boat, and shot after shot from the bank of fog rang out upon the stillness of the mist-laden air, and bullets skipped on the water around them. But these were sounds and sights not

unfamiliar to the youth, and in a few minutes the boat touched the shore.

At the same instant the robbers burst out of the fog-shrouded forest and hastened toward the boat. They had heard the firing, and run the last two miles of the trail.

"Valley men — Indian traitors," said the lad, and a volley of musketry from the invisible shooters echoed his words.

"Never mind the box," cried the captain, as he returned the fire. "We will come back for it if we live, and if we don't the devil will guard it forever." Then placing his gun in the boat and ordering the men aboard, he took the terrified girl in his arms and carried her to a safe place behind a great rock, pulled from his pocket a well-filled leather purse, gave it to her and bade her stay there till the fog cleared away.

Hardly had he reached the boat and the boat gone thrice her length from the shore, when the girl rushed toward the water with a wild scream.

A look in her direction discovered the treacherous Indians, cautiously descending the gorge.

"They will kill me," she cried piteously. Maddened at sight of his faithless allies the captain ordered the boat back to the point. He was too late; again the roar of musketry echoed among the hills, and as they touched the shore, the Indian maiden's life-blood soaked into the salt sand, and the lad who had sprung forward to rescue her sank with a cry upon the boat's bottom, dead.

Taking quick aim the captain fired, and laid low the foremost of the skulking savages, then seizing the tiller ordered the boat to the cutter.

From the cliff, into the immensity of the fog went volley after volley. From over the water came only the muffled sound of oars in the rowlocks, the rattling of chain, and the dull flapping sound of sails.

The breeze freshened. The dun-dripping vapor lifted — from the tree-tops — from the cliff — from the blue swishing water of the great

Bay. And bearing toward the ruddy headland of D'Or gleamed the white sails of the bold privateer, filled with the wind that blows always good to some one.

Many who tell the story claim that the vessel went down in a gale that very night, and all her crew were lost. Others say she was wrecked, but some of the men were saved, and that these men came back to search for the strong box. The first settlers at the Harbor found holes digged in the banks of the brook. The holes have since been thrice multiplied — with what success is not positively known — but it is a general belief that the treasure has never yet been found. They who have searched for it tell that the *Mary Jane* haunts the creek; that when they begin to dig a white sail gleams off the rocky point, the sound of oars is heard, and six bearded men and a smooth-faced youth come up from the water and surround the place where they are digging.

None have dared to pursue the search after sight of that phantom crew.

The Indian girl was buried beneath a great pine-tree that still stands near the table-land, its evergreen foliage bright as in the days so long ago.

It is years since. But the creek still cuts into the mural cliff, the gorge still rends the wooded mountain, the purple mystery still hangs over the rugged heights.

In "34" settlers built under the shadow of the lofty cliff, and a road winds now down either headland bank. The place is known as Hall's Harbor, called after the man who seventy and seven years ago moored the *Mary Jane* in the little creek, and under guise of sanctioned warfare made a highway of the mountain gorge to plunder his native land of Acadia.

VII.

THE STORY OF BLOODY CREEK.

TWELVE miles above the old Fort at Port Royal, the Annapolis River makes a bend of its clayey banks toward the south, to receive into its tawny waters a clear mountain-stream, up which the Bay of Fundy tide urges the turbid waters of the river for a distance of half a mile. At the confluence the banks of this stream are low and level; above tide-reach they are high and precipitous, and extend in a gradual rise to the irregular upheaval of granite and slate that forms the range of hills called South Mountain.

For one hundred and eighty years this stream has been known as Bloody Creek. Its waters are not more tawny than the river which receives them, nor are its banks more ruddy, but for

nearly two centuries it has borne this sanguinary appellation.

In the autumn of 1710, Port Royal was besieged and gallantly taken by the English. The Fort was in a wretched broken-down condition, and the English captors at once began the work of facing it with pieces of round timber six or seven inches in diameter. But the unusual severity of the winter, and a terrible disease that broke out among their troops, killing more than three hundred of the five hundred soldiers left in garrison by General Nicholson, had retarded the progress of the work; and in April of 1711, the Commander gave orders for the French settlers in the Banlieue and up the river, to immediately furnish the truncheons needed for its completion.

One reason and another was urged by the French as excuse or delay, and the order was not obeyed. In May the order was changed to promises of high prices for all who would bring

the batons; still there was no response. The offer was changed to a threat, followed by force, and when resistance was made to the force, five of the chief men of the habitants were arrested, put in irons, and held as hostages for the good faith of their countrymen.

Two weeks elapsed; the habitants were full of perplexity and despair. Their chief advisers had been the imprisoned men; their priest, Father Justinian, a Recollet friar, had been seized by the English early in January and sent to Boston to be imprisoned; communication with the Settlements about the Basin and the head of the Bay was cut off, and they were without council. As day succeeded day, and one expediency and another failed, a new spirit began to be manifest, that of submitting for the sake of their imprisoned countrymen, and yielding to the command, which they well knew was but one step removed from the hated and avoided yoke of allegiance. This feeling culminated on the twenty-eighth day of June.

Early that morning a report had reached them that if the batons were not brought to the Fort before noon of the thirtieth, new and effectual means would be taken to compel compliance.

Did the threat mean that the five innocent hostages would be executed? this was the thought that rushed to the heart of every one as he heard. There was earnest talk among them, and but two of all the habitants held to their idea of continued resistance. These were two young men, sons of Pierre Landrie, one of the prisoners at the Fort. At sundown they were seated in the doorway of their house; they had met with hot speech the hopeless words of their elders, but as they sat apart in the quiet of the hour, their own courage was fast forsaking them.

A movement in the bushes on the little hill above them attracted their attention, and both looked at once in the direction of the noise. Down one side the hill the trees had been partly cleared, and in this cleared space stood a woman bending over a grave. The golden bars of sun-

light slanting through the dark spruces flecked the white headstone and the bare brown mound it marked. The blood sprang to the faces of both men as they looked.

"When I see that grave," said Pierre the younger, "I would dare a thousand deaths rather than soil my lips with the form of a British oath."

Presently the woman turned, and walked down the little slope and into the path that led to the house. As she crossed the road that led to the Fort she paused for a moment and gazed intently down it, then pursued her way. When she reached the young men she said, "That man must be killed; if you do not do it, I will," and hurried past them into the house.

The men's eyes followed her gaze down the fortress road, and they saw walking leisurely up it a stranger; not one of their countrymen and evidently not an Englishman.

"If Father Justinian was not behind iron bars I could swear it was his gait," said Pierre.

"Would Heaven it was!" said the other. "We would not be a minority with him to lead, but they have threatened his life if he comes here again. It is very like him, but not more so than our mother's face was like his as she stood there by the grave; I could easily have taken her for him had she been in his priestly robes."

The stranger approached them and nodded carelessly as he met their gaze.

"I am no Englishman, and I would die sooner than submit to the cursed dogs," he said. "Is my speech strong enough to convince you I am no enemy?"

"It is strong enough to keep you inside the fortress gates if they inside heard it," said François.

"I have been inside them not an hour since," replied the stranger calmly, "and I came out as easily as I went in — but I used no such words while in" —

"And you think to carry back some words of

ours," interrupted Pierre hotly, rising as he spoke.

The stranger gazed quietly and steadily into his eyes.

"I carried nothing in," he said, "I carried much out. To-morrow, at midnight, eighty picked men of the garrison will march up the river to the Creek, burn down your mill and the houses of your people settled near it, and take every man, woman and child prisoner. Something must be done, and at once."

"Nothing can be done," replied the young men, "there is no spirit left; the people will submit to this as they have to other things. Except we two, all are determined to obey the order; there is no leader to urge them, and the men are all such as need to be led."

The woman was standing in the doorway, behind the young men, tall, and pale, and calm as stone.

"If it is a leader they lack, lead them!" she said. "The Landrie blood in your veins, your

father their prisoner, your sister their victim, is not this enough to incite you? — that man must be killed; if you do not do it, I will!"

The words were hot and passionate, but they seemed to proceed from lips of stone, as she stood, statue-like, in the dim light.

The stranger started with surprise when she spoke, and as she passed out of the house and disappeared in the dusk that was fast gathering among the great trees that bordered the little graveyard on the slope, he turned inquiringly to the men.

"What does she mean?" he asked.

"It is a long story," said Pierre, "and I have neither heart nor will to tell it all — my only sister lies up there in that burying ground. She died because she believed the lying words of an English officer at the Fort, who told her he loved her. She died in May, and since then my mother has been as you see her, her last words are always as you heard them, and since they have taken my father prisoner she has

been like one in a dream. Every day she goes up there to watch for Father Justinian — she says he is coming, and if we hold out till he comes the English tyrants will be killed — I have thought so too, but the priest cannot now get here in time to save us."

"There are twenty-four hours of time left," said the stranger. "I came here to tell you the message. If the priest comes in that time he will have bloody work on hand. I am going to the Indians up the river, they may like to know what I have told you."

"You!" cried both the men, "what can you do? How can you go there unguided? The Indians do not like to see men in your garb, we will go too, they know us."

"Stay where you are," said the man, "and in some way get half a dozen of your people to follow you. The English will send all their strong men on the march; they must be caught and killed, the Fort will then be easy of capture. But the killing must be done by the Indians,

and on the shores of the Creek. They will do the fighting with half a dozen Frenchmen to lead them on, and these French leaders you must in some way get — I am not used to parley, a little earlier than this time to-morrow I will meet you here."

And not pausing for further words he walked down the path to the fortress fork, where he disappeared a few moments in the clump of trees. When he emerged again on the path he carried on his stooped shoulders a large bundle, and walking rapidly he crossed the meadow-road and disappeared in the thick woods to the south.

When dawn rimmed the hills behind the encampment at the head of the Creek, the Indians were already up, and moving about from camp to camp. Word had come from Gaulin, the "warrior priest" at Placentia, for them to repair to the head of the Bay, to assist and encourage the French to resist an expected attack of the English troops on the Settlements. As

they went about their camps, busying themselves in the preparations for departure, Father Justinian suddenly appeared in their midst.

They had not seen his approach until he stood among them. In the dim dawnlight and shadowed by the great trees, he seemed an apparition, and many of them fled as they saw him.

He had changed in the six months' imprisonment. His hair was no longer tonsured, nor was his face shaven. But the large loose covering on his head, the gray garment of serge, girdled with a knotted cord, and the wooden sandals, were the habiliments of his Order; and his voice at once assured them of his identity, as calling several of them by name, he began to speak to them in a patois of French and Micmac much used by the missionaries after long association with a particular portion of the tribe.

He was weary and in want of food, and while he rested and ate he told them of his escape

from prison, and his secret journey back to his people. Then quickly following upon this, he told them the English soldiers were to march to the mouth of the Creek that night, and at daylight attack not only the settlers, but their own encampment as well.

The Indian blood was fired; and stimulated by the presence of their spiritual leader, they were hot for assault. All the morning the priest remained with them. Upon the soft ground at his feet he drew the plan of attack, showed them how they must march down the Creek to within half a mile of its mouth, where the banks on either side were high and precipitous. There among the dense woods they must secrete themselves to wait the arrival of the soldiers who would march direct up the dark road to the Creek, where they would probably rest before advancing to the houses of the settlers.

On a sheet of bark he drew a similar plan, and dispatched a runner, fleet of foot, to the

encampment up the valley, with orders for the Indians at that place to lose no time in coming to their aid.

When he had fully explained to them the plan of attack, he told them he must leave, and go to the settlers at Port Royal to incite them to join in the fighting. This, the Indians strongly opposed. They felt a superhuman aid in the presence of their trusted priest, and only consented to his departure on condition of his returning with a dozen or more of the Frenchmen to aid in the battle. This condition the Father promised to fulfill, and it was not far from mid-day when he started away from the encampment.

True to his word the stranger was back to the house on the slope as early as sunset rays tipped the columned hills across the river.

No one seemed to be about the place and supposing the young men would soon arrive he sat down upon the door-stone to rest. He had

waited some time when the tall woman suddenly came down the path from the hillside and approached him.

For several minutes she did not answer his inquiry for the young men, but stood gazing steadily at him. At last she said:

"They have not been here since morning; they are in the dungeons at the Fort, they were taken as they started out to raise volunteers to help the Indians."

While she said this, the woman was rational and natural, but almost immediately the strange apathy and calm came again upon her, and she turned and went into the house.

The stranger followed her. He was hungry, and she gave him food, and told him that the young men believed him to be a spy from the garrison, that the people generally believed the same, and would kill him at sight. Then she became again statue-like, and would not utter another word, but gazed out upon the hillside where the grave was shadowed by gloomy firs.

"I am rested," said the man, at length, "and I am going up the river again to the Indians. I promised them aid, and I must go and give what help my two arms can afford. This night must be a bloody blow at English tyranny." And the strange man started away into the dusky woods.

As he hurried along the dim pathway, he heard a footstep behind, and the woman came up beside him. Over her face was the strange, passive look, and in her hands a long naked French rapier.

"That man will lead the soldiers," she said, "he must be killed; if no one else does it I must!" and passed on ahead.

The man grasped her shoulder and stopped her, she wrenched herself from his grasp and pursued her course, and he was forced to quicken his steps to keep up with her rapid pace.

At the garrison all arrangements were made, and the troops ready to march.

The day before there had come into the Fort a stranger, who said he was a soldier from New England and claimed to have been with Phipps in his capture of Port Royal. He seemed to know the country round about Port Royal well, and described the Creek and the bridge across it and the lay of the land in the neighborhood. The commander had him map out a line of march in the most direct route and at his own request assigned him a prominent place in the expedition.

But when the soldiers marched out of the Fort at midnight, this strange volunteer was not with them. His line of march, however, was confidently followed by the commander as he led his troops through the dense forest, in the dim starlight, to the designated place of attack.

Before dawn they reached the brow of the hill that banked the west side of the Creek. As they crossed the brow the creeping wind of day-dawn stirred the still night air, rustled in the

tree-tops, soughed in the firs, lingered in the pines, and swayed the slim underwood. The soldiers shuddered — it is a saying, that they who shudder at this wind will never live to hear another.

Down the hill they marched, to the bottom of the valley, and on to the bridge across the Creek. "On the other side we will rest," said Captain Pujeon, as he led the way.

Most of them rested before the other brink was gained. For without warning cry, a score of savages burst from the thick woods and rushed down the steep incline behind them; another score came down the eastern bank and on to the bridge; and packed in that narrow defile, with the rushing water on either hand, and beneath them, the savage butchery began.

Cries of pain, and dying groans, mingled with wild war-whoops, and the crimson blood of Old England and New flowed into the clear waters of the Creek.

Leading the redskins, regardless of flying bullets, was a tall man in the garb of a wayfarer. Armed with a long, straight blade, and cool in the midst of such terrible confusion, this man seemed to head every onslaught upon the entrapped soldiers, but not once did his glittering French rapier, except in self-defense, draw blood.

Aloof from the fight, on the east side the Creek, clad in priestly robes of gray serge, stood a tall form, waving on with silent hand the death-dealing savages, who obeyed every sacerdotal gesture with wild yells of confidence.

It was quick and bloody work. In less than twenty minutes most of the Englishmen were bleeding, dead or dying, for the murderous tomahawk left no wounded victims. Its blow was unerring and deadly, and the savages took no prisoners except such as seemed to promise a ransom.

The Major of the company, a young, handsome man, had been taken prisoner, and as the

Indians were binding his arms, the tall, robed figure cried: "That man must be killed!"

The savage captors hesitated; he would bring a handsome ransom. Again the order rang out, clear and calm:

"That man must be killed; if you do not do it, I will!" Still no hatchet was raised to execute the solemn order.

The gray-robed figure hurried forward, seized from the belt of an Indian a bloody tomahawk, and dashing it into the head of the prisoner, fell prostrate on the ground, as if dealt, instead of dealing, a blow.

At this instant the tall man who had led the Indians came up to the group. The dying Major cast an inquiring glance upon him.

"It is the New England soldier!" he muttered, "he led us into this cursed trap!"

The tall man spoke in French to the gray-gowned figure reverently upheld by the Indians.

The blood came to the pale face, and the eyes opened and gazed around as if in search

of some object. At last they fell upon the form of the dead Major; then the lips parted, and clear and calm came the words:

"Holy Father, he is dead, I killed him!" And flinging back the gray robe, the tall straight form of the insane Frenchwoman stood among the bewildered savages.

There was wild excitement for a moment. Then the strange leader took the garments from the ground and put them upon himself, straightened his stooped shoulders, and spoke to them by name and in their native speech, and they saw that it was Father Justinian himself who had led the bloody fight.

It was soon explained. He had escaped his captors in Boston, and dressed in disguise as a New England soldier, had easily made his entrance to the Fort at Port Royal. So completely did he deceive the garrison that they made known to him the secret expedition. His quick mind prepared a plot, and in pursuance of this he drew up the plan which would carry

the soldiers to the only place on the march where they could be successfully attacked.

He had daringly carried his sacred habiliments with him, in a bundle, and before he arrived at the Indian encampment, had put them on, and again packed them when visiting the Acadians.

As the woman accompanied him on the march through the woods, her strong resemblance to himself, which he well knew before, suggested the idea that he might dress her in his robes, and let her personate him in the fight, while he could himself lead, in place of the expected and promised Frenchmen. He disclosed his identity, and she acquiesced to the proposal and gave him her sword. In the heat of the attack the Indians did not closely scrutinize, and the darkness aided the ruse.

The news of the massacre spread to the town. There were not twenty soldiers left in the Fort. In the consternation at the terrible tidings the

imprisoned Frenchmen readily escaped, and they and their countrymen at once blockaded the Fort. Message was sent to Gaulin to come to their aid with his warrior Indians, but while they waited his arrival four hundred New York troops reinforced the garrison, and they were compelled to abandon the investment and wait a more favorable opportunity.

Father Justinian, though openly charged with the instigation of the attack, managed to escape arrest and punishment, and for many years remained in the Province, encouraging his people to disobedience of the English rule, and inciting the Indians to frequent depredations. But never afterward in the history of the country was there chronicled so deadly and daring a massacre as that at Bloody Creek.

At sight of the grave on the hillside, the woman's reason again left her, nor was she ever afterward rational, or sensible of the event through which she passed. The story of her personation of the priest became known, and

until she died the white-faced wandering woman was everywhere called The Friar Marghette.

Forty rods above the bridge that now spans the Creek, the stringers and abutments of that old French bridge can still be traced.

The east bank is cleared and cultivated, and on either side and above and below, stretch green fertile meadows. Up from the meadows slope the wooded ranges. Only in the name that yet clings to its dashing waters is there trace of that bloody fray.

VIII.

THE WILD POSTMAN.

SEPTEMBER 5, 1775.

That day the sun shone on the breeze-ruffled Basin of Minas and the dwellers along its borders, gladdening the hearts of as contented and prosperous a people as ever lived together. Up from the wide-throated chimneys of their hundred houses curled the blue smoke of clean hardwood fires, and healthy happy children surrounded the breakfast-steaming hearthstones.

Sea and land were the free heritage of these rural French Acadians. Out of the rivers and ocean-filled Basin they drew the finest of fish. From the fields on the sunny hillside they gathered apples and wild fruit. On the rich grass of the salt meadows their cattle thrived, and no

blight fell upon their abundant harvests. The friendly wild men of the woods brought them the choicest of venison, and looms and flax-wheels furnished comely apparel for old and young.

On this fifth day of September, early in the morning, a barefoot sturdy boy, about twelve years old, strolled along a path through the woods. He had been sent by his father, a rich planter, to an Indian encampment a mile or more distant, to get what was called in those days a potato basket, such as the Indians made for the farmers. Like most boys, he loved to roam the woods, and this bright autumn morning, careless of time, he lingered along the path that wound among the trees of the grand old forests that then covered the hills of Acadie; and it was late in the forenoon when he reached the camps. He found the Indians in great alarm, preparing to break up and leave; and learned from them that British soldiers were marching upon the French villages, and would likely kill the people.

Afraid to return alone, and lured by boyish love of adventure, he was easily persuaded to go with the Indians to a place of safety in the wide forests to the South. The next night they saw from their camp on the mountain-side, the fires of burning buildings, and a few days later they learned from fugitives to the woods that the houses and barns were burned, and the men, women and children had been taken prisoners and huddled on board vessels and sent to foreign countries.

There was now no alternative left the boy but to remain with his present protectors. Years passed away, and no tidings of his parents reached him. He grew to manhood, large and strong like the great trees among which he lived.

The Indians had from the first, for some meaning of their own, called the boy Jimcharles, and by this name alone he was known in the Settlements, where he spent much of his time and learned to speak the English language.

At the Fort he often staid for weeks at a time, vying with the soldiers in military art, and soon gained great skill in the use of his gun and other arms.

No man in the country could load his piece so quickly or shoot with such deadly aim as Jimcharles. From the soldiers he learned also to read and write in English. His native speech he retained, and thus had at his command three languages. This, with his knowledge of the woods and well-known intrepidity, made him a valuable guide and interpreter to the many sportsmen who came to the country to hunt in the great forests. At the age of thirty years no man was so well-known to whites and Indians as Jimcharles, and few men were more fully trusted as a friend or dreaded as a foe. Erratic as the woods he roamed, and stern as steel to every purpose his name was an "open sesame" to any door, and the grand houses of the rich, the humble cot of the poor, and the bough-thatched wigwam of the forest-dwellers

were "open house" to Jimcharles the white wild man.

No one could tell like he adventures with such flavor of wild reality. Was some important message to be sent through the woods to a distant Settlement, Jimcharles was the only man who could be depended upon to get it through. Did bears harass a neighborhood and kill the farmer's cattle, Jimcharles was notified, and soon the pelts of the thievish brutes were stretched to dry on the sunny side of a barn. Did children stray away and get lost in the great forest, no one was more willing to search or so likely to find as Jimcharles. Were unfriendly Indians making dangerous encroachments, the sight of Jimcharles was always sufficient to put them on their best behavior.

In the summer of 1775 the Revolutionary War of the colonies broke out. Nova Scotia remained loyal to the king; and the British Government found it of great military value as headquarters for the recruiting, equipment and

transportation of soldiers, and the building and fitting out of vessels.

The confiscated farms of the evicted Acadians had, some time before this, been occupied with British subjects invited thither by a free grant of the land. The only communication by land between Halifax and these now prosperous settlements, was a military road from sea to sea, a distance of about fifty miles through an unbroken forest. In the summer of 1775 the British Government decided to have a weekly carriage of mail matter over the road from Halifax to Piziquid, now the town of Windsor.

The distance could be covered only on horseback or upon foot. There was no habitation of white man on the road, and the journey was beset with dangers from storms and wild beasts and unfriendly Indians. Not a man in all the country was equal to the task but the fearless Jimcharles, and to him the contract was given. Ten years he traveled this road once in a week. Strapped to his back in a great

leather-locked knapsack was the mail, and on his shoulder always his loaded gun. Tireless as a hound and faithful to his trust, he pursued his lonely journey, among the leaves in summer and over and through the snow in winter. Not once in all that time did he fail to deliver at each end of his route the weekly mail. Nor was a single letter or parcel ever lost or missing, after once it reached his hands. Often he carried large sums of money for merchants and traders, and always accounted for every penny on call.

Early in October, 1785, there came to that part of the settlement of Minas that used to be the French Village, an old man, with hair well-streaked in gray, but stout and sturdy, and dressed like a farmer. He put up at the only inn in the village, and paid for his meals and lodgings as he took them. With no one did he seem to have business or hold conversation. His time was spent mostly in walking about the Settlement, and along the shore of the Basin and over the great meadows.

A stranger thus conducting naturally aroused the curiosity and suspicion of the settlers, and they resolved to have him interviewed by the wary Jimcharles when he next came with the mail. But the very day the Postman was to arrive, the old man was suddenly missed from the inn. Since supper the night before he had not been seen. During the early part of the forenoon it became generally known that some time in the night an earthen crock containing money had been dug up in the garden of one of the settlers. The crock, and a gold coin found near the spot, indicated that the unearthed treasure was of great value.

There was no doubt as to who was the lucky finder; it must have been the Stranger. But where had he gone, was the general inquiry. In the harbor there were boats and fishing vessels coming and going. There was the road, considerably traveled, leading to Port Royal; and the pathway through the woods to Halifax. By one of these ways the old man had very

likely left the village, and something other than idle curiosity prompted inquiry as to which.

Late in the forenoon, three well-known Indian scouts of dangerous character, started in search of him, on the road to Halifax. They struck his trail, and before night overtook him. They were large men, armed and savage, and there was no use in resistance. They stripped the traveler of his clothing, and robbed him of his money which was all in gold. Then they divided the gold equally, and tying their victim to a tree, held a council to decide his fate.

At last the largest and most excited of the three savages rose from the ground, seized his tomahawk and walked toward the naked traveler tied to the tree. A wail of despair from the tortured man rang through the woods as the Indian raised the murderous weapon to strike him to death. The same instant came the sharp report of a gun, and the Indian threw his tomahawk in the air and with a savage yell of pain fell dead to the ground.

In the direction of the report stood Jimcharles, deliberately reloading his gun. In a few minutes he had disarmed the other savages, and cut the terrified old man loose from the tree. The Indians knew with whom they had to deal, and offered no resistance.

The bold Postman gathered up the traveler's clothes and assisted him to dress; then asked him in which direction he was traveling, and learning it was toward Halifax, at once started back with him toward the city, carrying the bows and arrows of the three savages, and leaving the two living ones disarmed with their dead companion.

The old man did not dare to tell his rescuer of the gold the Indians had taken from him, lest it might be cause for killing on his part.

Night came on, but the Postman feared to camp lest the savages should be re-enforced and follow him to revenge the death of their brave. Near morning, however, they came to a clearing in the woods, about five miles from Halifax;

the old man was very tired, and here his rescuer made for him a bed of fir-boughs and bade him lie down and rest. This he gladly did, and in a few minutes slept as only a tired healthy man can sleep. His only covering was the far blue sky, and the only light was from the still farther away myriad stars. This light fell full on his tanned, time-furrowed face, as he lay upon the fragrant fir-tips.

On a "cradle-hill" near by, with gun across his knees, sat the intrepid Jimcharles, ready to bring to the ground the first savage who might emerge from the woods. Often he looked inquiringly into the upturned face of the sleeper, and as the slumber grew deep there seemed in the soft uncertain starlight to come over it a shadowy face, dim as an almost forgotten dream. As he gazed upon it long, line after line became distinct, and the features of a face that was one of the recollections of his boyhood, was now the face of the sleeping stranger.

That face was his father's — smooth, and

ruddy, and pleasant as memory had kept it through the effacing mist of years. Slowly he recalled the scenes of his child life, so many years ago, and the phantom face became real, and he was about to speak to it, when the whir of wings above his head startled him. He looked up, and saw a bird flying rapidly toward the east. At the same time he saw that day-dawn had dimmed the stars. It took but an instant to do this, and turn again to the face his eyes had just left. The light of dawn was on it, and he saw only the hard time-worn features of the man he had saved from the tomahawk, sleeping soundly, with the dew upon his iron-gray hair. Had he dozed, and dreamed? There seemed no other satisfactory explanation, and he reluctantly accepted the too practical suggestion of his healthy brain.

Ashamed of his weakness he arose, and awakened the old man; gave him a slice of bread and cold meat, and without waiting for him to eat it, started again on his journey; there were

five miles yet to travel. The Postman led in silence till they came in sight of the town, then he turned his face scrutinizingly upon his companion and asked his name.

"John White," was the sharp reply.

Not another word was spoken by either till they entered the tavern. There Jimcharles ordered breakfast and rum. After eating, and drinking, the Postman lighted his pipe for a quiet smoke before starting back on his now doubly perilous mail-route to the Settlement.

While thus engaged some man present entered into conversation with him in French. Either this or the rum made the old man confidential, and he spoke to the Postman in French, telling him that his home was once in Minas, that he was taken prisoner with the rest of his countrymen and carried away to strange lands where he had since lived, and had now after thirty years been back to see his native hamlet, and that his French name was Jean Le Blanc, which was the same as John White.

The Postman had paid silent attention up to this point; now he took the arm of the old man and led him into a private room.

"Had you a boy named Charles?" he eagerly asked. "Yes," answered the man, "but he was lost or killed that day the British soldiers took us prisoners."

"I am that boy," said the great sinewy man before him. "I was lost to you, and you to me, but we are both found now — father!"

The last word broke the old man's firmness, and tears rolled over his weather-beaten face. But neither man was emotional, and the exchange of homely greetings was soon over. Then the father told his son about getting the gold he had buried at the time of the expulsion, and its robbery by the Indians. How easily it could have been recovered the day before when it was on the persons of the dead and subdued savages, had the old man only told his rescuer; but no word of upbraiding was said.

It was a large sum of money, and to get

it back from the wild robbers was indeed a problem for the cunning of the brave forest rover. He knew too well the character of the Indians to undertake by force to despoil them. Before another day the whole tribe would know that Jimcharles had shot and killed a Micmac brave, and that is all they would know of the affair. The fact of the gold and robbery would not be told, nor would the robbers likely part with any of the gold soon.

Whatever was to be done he must first have rest and sleep. So engaging a room and bed for the old man, he went to the governor and threw up his contract to carry the mail, then returned to his quarters and slept.

By daylight Jimcharles had laid his plans to get from the Indians his father's hard-earned money.

To despoil them at the burial-ground was the only feasible scheme. The third day at sunset they would bury the dead brave. The two robbers were the only witnesses of his death, and

they must for that reason be at his burial. The chief of his tribe, and the medicine-man must be there also, to assist in the sacred rites. Others there might be, but the place of burial was far from any encampment, and it was seldom an Indian went to a funeral when it was not his duty so to do.

Within the limits of the burial-ground an Indian would not take his gun, or bows and arrows, or kill anything. All this his life among the Indians had taught him. But even should he succeed in getting the gold from the Indians in their disarmed condition in the graveyard, there seemed a difficulty, once outside the sacred limits, to save himself from the savage avengers.

There was but one effectual weapon to use, and that was the red man's most fatal slayer — the white man's "fire-water." With this he hoped to overpower the Indians and get safely away with the money. It was hazardous, but he was brave and strong.

Pursuing this plan he stowed in his knapsack four bottles of the newest and strongest rum to be had, and late in the afternoon, with his gun, and the bow and arrows of the dead Indian on his shoulders, he started out on the most perilous undertaking of his life. The distance to be traveled was thirty-five miles. Taking an untraveled trail, and timing himself, he reached just before sundown the great hill where the red men of that part of Acadia had been for ages laid away to rest.

Cautiously approaching he saw the funeral attendants. There were the four he had counted upon, and a great fierce brave brother of the dead man. Keeping concealed he saw that a shallow grave had been dug, and they waited for the sunset hour. It came, and the dead warrior was placed in the earth, and with him his pipe and tobacco. Then there was a sad pause: the bow and arrows of the brave should be placed beside him, but they could not be had.

Anticipating this, Jimcharles stepped inside

the limits, and with the unstrung bow of the dead man in one hand and the quiver of arrows in the other, he walked deliberately to the grave, placed them beside the dead brave, and sat down upon the ground with the others.

Dark scowls was all the greeting he received. He did not expect more, although he knew the act he had performed was the only possible expiation of the crime he had committed.

The simple symbolical rites of burial were soon completed, the grave filled in, and the customary mound of great stones closely packed over it. Then the chief lighted his pipe, smoked a little, and handed it to the white man. It was an offer of peace, and he gladly accepted it, smoked and returned the pipe to the chief, who handed it to the medicine-man. He smoked and passed it to one of the robbers, who refused to smoke, as did the two others. This refusal was a declaration of war to the death, and only the sacredness of the place restrained them from deadly encounter.

Now came the white man's turn to try for peace. Taking from his knapsack one of the black bottles, he drew the cork, tasted, and handed it to the chief. The old man tasted, smacked his lips in approbation of the quality, then took a hearty drink and passed the bottle to the medicine-man. He drank, and passed to his next companion, who hesitated an instant, then took a long drink, as did the other robber. But when the bottle was handed to the brother of the dead man, he dashed it to pieces on a rock, and scowled defiance at the owner.

Not a word was spoken. The red man's thirst for fire-water was now aroused, and his white assailer produced another bottle and sent it on its round. When it reached the last Indian it was empty, but he dashed it to pieces as he had the other. It was now only a question of quantity. The knapsack held two more bottles, and one of them was quickly in the hands of the chief who was already beginning to feel the

effects of the fiery quality of the liquor. It was drained, and shared at the hands of the last savage the fate of the other two.

The cool white man now brought out the remaining bottle, but there was no use for it. The savages had already quaffed too deeply and were tumbling over, senseless, on the ground. The old chief was the last to succumb. The big brother of the dead man now rose to his feet. This was Jimcharles only chance for life, and he acted promptly. Soon as the Indian took the first step toward the place where he had left his gun, he sprang to his feet and grappled the great warrior. The struggle was a fierce one; both men were strong, and about equally matched. One was urged on by hate and thirst for vengeance, and the other struggling for his life.

Finding that he could not by strength and skill in wrestling, gain an inch of vantage, the white man suddenly released himself from the clutch of his powerful antagonist, and taking a step backward dealt him a tremendous blow in

the forehead, with his bony fist, and the great savage fell to the ground, senseless as if struck with a sledge-hammer.

It was now but the work of a minute to bind his hands and feet with strong thongs. This done, a few minutes more sufficed to find and get possession of the gold on the clothes of the drunken robbers. Jimcharles was now master of himself and the situation. He placed the remaining bottle of rum where it could be easily reached by the first Indian who should revive from the drunken stupor; then going to where they had left their arms, he cut and took away the bow-strings, and removed the flint from each gun, and shouldering his own, started on the long return tramp through the forest to Halifax.

All night without halt he walked, guided by the stars, and his knowledge of hills and valleys. Near noon the next day he reached Halifax, and went at once to the Soldiers' Barracks. Here he was safe from any lurking Indian who might

be anxious to avenge the death of the buried brave, and the desecration of his burial-place.

There was in the harbor a vessel bound for Boston, and under cover of the darkness, he went on board and in the morning had the old man join him. The next day the vessel sailed, and Jimcharles never more roamed the forests of Acadia, but his name has ever since been borne by one or more of the Micmac dwellers therein.

From Boston he made his way to Louisiana, where for the last thirty years had been the home of his father. There he lived till the old man's death, a short time after. Jimcharles was sole heir to his father's property, but money had no charm for the wild woodsman. He had no use for it and did not care to make one. In a short time he went up the Missouri River to a small settlement of French Acadians, near where is now the city of Madison. Here he laid out all his money in wild lands, and then wandered away into the old timber woods about the great lakes, where for many years after he was known

as the Acadian hunter and famous for his great strength and daring deeds. At last he was seen no more in the settlements or the forests about them. No tidings of his death came to any one. Nor did sign of his living meet the eye of settler or forest ranger.

Years of time greatly increased the value of the land he had bought, and men wished to purchase it, but no title could be given. If the owner was living no one knew where to find him, and if he was dead his heirs were unknown. So the valuable unimproved land still stood upon the records and in the speech of men as belonging to Jimcharles

In the summer of 1816, there died in the city of Philadelphia a man named Charles Le Blanc. Little was known of the man in the place where he died, beyond the fact that he was a French Acadian who owned landed property of great value, and left no near relatives, nor had he made a will.

About a year after his death, descendants of

one Pierre Le Blanc commenced suit in the United States Circuit Court, to establish their title as heirs of Charles Le Blanc. During the twelve years this suit was in the court, evidence was collected from nearly all over the continent, and the result was most singular. From the testimony of many very old French Acadians, it appeared that Pierre Le Blanc was a paternal uncle of Charles Le Blanc; that he had ten children, who were the only next of kin of Charles Le Blanc at the time of his death. It also appeared that there was another Pierre Le Blanc who was a paternal uncle of Charles Le Blanc, and who had ten children, only next of kin of Charles Le Blanc. It further appeared that six out of the ten children of each family had the same christian name; that each Pierre Le Blanc was a French Acadian, and the father of each was named Jean Le Blanc. The claimants through each Pierre Le Blanc sought to get the same property.

Were there two Charles Le Blancs? If yes,

then which one owned the property? If there was but one, which of the Pierre Le Blancs was his uncle? And who of the descendants of Pierre Le Blanc were the rightful claimants? So the paradoxical inquiry continued. And the inheritance remains undisturbed.

Is it possible that this historic tradition of Jimcharles may furnish a clew to the legal tangle of more than half a century? Will it turn out at last that the dualistic Charles Le Blanc, so difficult of identification, was none other than the Wild Postman of Acadia?

IX.

THE SCARLET SPECTER OF SANDY RIDGE.

THIRTY miles up the beautiful valley lying between the northern and southern range of mountains, there is a curious, cumulose drift of gray siliceous soil, in a series of mounds or dunes. These dunes are parallel with intervening level wastes of fine white sand partly grown over with a brown heath-like gorse; their summits are clothed with dark foliaged yellow pines, and a stunted undergrowth of hardwood. For nearly two miles, in an easterly direction, this succession of sand hills stretches, sloping gradually to a level verdured plain, which in turn merges into an extensive bog, whose barren peaty surface is bordered by the same forest trees that shadow the Sandy Ridge.

On a southern slope of one of these ridges are innumerable holes digged into the bank; some many feet, others but a short distance, and many partly filled with the shifting sand, in which the furze has again rooted and grown as abundant as before.

Old men say this slope is the site of a French burying ground, and that the holes are the work of adventurers who digged in the gray hillside for the golden coins supposed to have been hidden with the buried people. They also say that a woman in a scarlet coat haunts the place, appearing and disappearing, mysteriously as the weird wind of the pine tops.

The fifteenth of October, 1746, a storm-tossed, dismantled French transport sailed into the spacious harbor of Chebucto, now Halifax, and came to anchor in the broad and beautiful sheet of water now called Bedford Basin.

On board the transport were one hundred and forty men. Six thousand men and fifty-two

ships accompanied her when she sailed from Rochelle on the fourth of June. It was a mighty fleet, and freighted with high hopes of France. Louisburg, so lately captured by the English, was to be retaken. Port Royal was to be stormed, and the long disputed colonies pass again under French rule.

But multiplied disasters overtook the vast armament. Before the coast of France was cleared two ships of the line were burned. A week later two were seized by English cruisers. Later, a scorbutic fever broke out. And near Sable Island they were overtaken by a terrible storm, and the whole squadron scattered and dispersed over the tempest-tossed and unfamiliar North Atlantic Ocean.

When the terrible storm abated, and the bewildering fogs cleared, the men on this transport looked eagerly about them for the accompanying ships. They saw them not. The treacherous sands and entangling shallows that reach out from that crescent "ocean graveyard" had

washed into the surging, roaring depths beyond, more than twenty of the stanch and human-freighted ships.

Urged thither by favoring winds, the transport, in a disabled condition, made this safe and spacious harbor of Chebucto.

A league or more up the shore, on a wooded point that made out into the blue waters of the Basin, lived a few French families. When the troops from the transport landed and were camped, these people came down the shore to greet them. From them the men learned the fate of the great fleet.

Twenty sail only had reached the harbor. A thousand of the men on these twenty ships were buried on the shore of the Basin; and but two days before the transport arrived, the remnant of the squadron had set sail from Port Royal. When the commander of the transport heard this he was eager to join the fleet, and at once ordered his men aboard. But panic-struck and already stricken with symptoms of the dreaded

fever, they refused to set foot again on the plague-cursed ship. There was hot dispute, but the men prevailed, and with only a crew aboard, the transport set sail to overtake the other vessels, the soldiers promising to march overland through the forest and join their commander at Port Royal.

Two old men offered to guide them on the first day's journey, and assured them that with directions and proper attention to the stars and the sun, they could easily make their way to Minas. There they could readily procure guides for the remainder of the journey, which was but a three days' march from the head of the Basin. Ready to go anywhere, out of sight of those thousand graves of their fellow seamen, the men were eager to undertake the march, and confident that they could find their way through the wilderness.

When they were about to start, an old woman dressed in a red coat and cap, attracted their attention.

"It is old Mag," said the guides. "She brought us news from Cobequid to-day. Five years ago her boy was lost, and ever since she has been searching for him. Some of the soldiers at Port Royal gave her the coat and cap, and she wears them so the British will not kill her, she says. From Bay to Basin she tramps, and always alone. She has her own paths through the woods; no one else knows them, no one ever meets her, but she is never lost."

When the soldiers first approached the settlers, the woman had glanced sharply at them, but they did not notice her and she paid no further heed to them. Now, however, when they started to march, she came toward them.

She was small, and slight of form. Her close-cut hair was gray, and on her head she wore only the little military cap. The big red coat hung loose around her narrow shoulders and reached far down over the blue woollen skirt of her dress. Her face was sharp, and the small eyes eager and keen.

She walked up very near the men, and without speaking, looked sharply into each bronzed face. When she came beside the commander who was a young man, he said: "Good day, mother."

She started, and the small eyes glanced piercingly into his, but she made no answer, nor seemed to heed the laughter of the men, as with a chorus of "good-bys" they started on their march and entered into the dense forest that bordered the silvery Basin.

The cool depths of the great woods invigorated the men, and they marched the whole day, resting only at noon for dinner.

"Where is old Mag?" some one asked of the guides. "We thought we saw her red coat through the trees a while ago." But the guides shook their heads.

"She is safe with the women," they said. "She stays always a week or more with us. If she were here she could lead you to Minas, if she liked. She knows the way; it is her home."

When they rested at night, another of the men protested he had seen her red coat during the afternoon.

"It was old Mag, or a British soldier," said the man.

"It was the red leaves of the maples," said the guides. "Though it might be she would follow you, for she says the captain here is her long-lost son."

The men laughed at the idea of the crazy woman, and laid themselves down to sleep.

Next morning, their guides left them. When they rested at sunset that night, hope was not high in their hearts. Fever symptoms had again come upon them, and a few of their number were already sick with the dread disease. The simple remedies carried with them were given, and the next day's march was only as far as the sick men could go.

"We will reach Minas by noon of another day," they said as they started again on the third morning. The sick men made no answer;

in their thoughts were the thousand graves around that silvery Basin.

When the morning of the next day dawned and the march was resumed, a cold rain came on, and by night of another day they found that they had gone out of their course, and had passed the French settlements. Where they now were they could not tell, but they found themselves in the valley, with the mountains on either side of them, and knew they were in a part of the country not described by their guides on the route to Minas.

More than half the men were by this time sick and suffering and disheartened. The brave young commander, knowing that Port Royal was at the western end of the valley and could not be many days' march away, urged them on in the hope to reach this destination. But fate had for the stricken young soldiers a nearer destination.

The cold rain continued. On the afternoon of the following day they struck a sandy plain.

Up from the plain to the west rose a series of low hills topped with towering pines; the great trees promised shade, the soft furzy ground rest. With all their strength the sick and hopeless soldiers pushed on toward them, and at sunset reached the first ridge, and laid themselves down to wait for strength, or death — they cared little which.

When morning came again they saw, seated by the young commander's head, the strange, soldier-coated woman. If they had seen Port Royal they would not have been more surprised. In their fatigue and sickness they had forgotten about her, and since that first day's march her name had not been spoken by any among them.

The woman expressed no surprise at their condition, and except to the commander, she spoke but seldom. In and out among the sick and dying men she went; what comfort she could give them, she gave. Water was their want, and to the thirty, disheartened men,

OLD MAG AND THE YOUNG COMMANDER.

there seemed no prospect of getting it. But the strange woman knew where was a deep and pure spring, and hour after hour, in their small tin cans she brought it to them, cool and fresh.

The great haversacks, so stout at the start, were nearly empty now, and what food remained was salt. After the rain the sun shone with all the fiery heat of a July day. It was a good-by summer shining from the clear autumn sky. It ripened the late grain of the Acadian farmers; it reddened the clustering apples in their orchards; tinged with many hues the forest foliage, and brought delight and gladness to thousands of hearts. But it scorched the cheeks and parched the lips of the poor soldier lads who had pitched their final tent on that wild sand-ridge. Fitful winds rustled in the tall pine tops, and fluttered the leaves of tossing branches far above them, but stooped not to sway the hot brown furze, or fan the hectic faces of the fever-stricken men stretched upon it.

By noon of the next day one half their number were still as the stirless air about them. Their weak comrades laid them to rest in the hot sand, and then lay down themselves, to rise never again.

Constantly the strange red-coated woman attended to their wants. The captain was to her crazy mind her long-sought son, and for him she had special care. But all the men were "her boys," and to all she filled a mother's place: closed the eyes and laid the swollen, still hands over the quiet hearts, and when no one was left strong enough, she digged the narrow beds in the sand, and laid the dead away to rest.

At last her strength seemed to fail, and she lay down with the dying men and made no further effort.

While there, in the still, hot afternoon, with no sound but the faint swaying of the pine-tops above them, and the fainter rustling of the brown furze about them, she raised herself on

one arm and listened. They who watched her listened, but they heard nought.

"It is the marching of men!" she said. "I hear them; they are coming to save you!"

Eagerly the hopeless soldiers tried to listen also, but only the sound of the dry hot wind fell upon their dull ears.

"I hear them," again said the woman. "I must go and find them before they pass." And she rose to her feet, but fell back helpless.

"It is her crazy head," the soldiers said, as hope died again in their hearts. "Her poor crazy head."

The next morning she was better, or said she was. "I am going to find the troops," she said; "they must have rested all night, and are not far away. I will bring them back with me."

The lads looked at one another silently, as she placed a can of water from the spring at every head. She did not say the haversacks were empty, but they guessed it. They waved their sick hands in good-by as she went down the

slope. "Her poor crazy head," they murmured, as her light feet sped over the furze and sand — "her poor crazy head" — and watched till they lost the last gleam of the red coat and cap among the great trees on the opposite hill.

Over the barren wastes, in every direction, went her light, crazy feet. At last she struck the beaten trail of a marching army; but the troops were far away. It was the trail of Ramzey and his seven hundred men, on their return march from Port Royal to Minas. They had gone within half a mile of that death camp on the sand ridges.

All day the old woman followed on their trail, then gave up, and weary and tottering returned to the sick soldiers. The tin cans were empty, but there was no longer need to fill them. Not one of her brave "boys" was left alive. For them all now the march was ended.

Late in November Old Mag made her appearance at Minas. She had not been at the village

for two months, and the people supposed she had met death in some of her wild tramps. Many questions were asked about her long absence, but she talked little, and seemed to be no longer wild in her insanity, but strange and silent.

As the years passed, she grew more silent, and gave up her wandering fits, except in September and October of every autumn, when she was missed from the hamlet.

At the time of the expulsion of her people in "55" she was off on one of these tramps. By some means her little house escaped the burning, and when British subjects took possession of the lands of the evicted Acadians, they found the old French woman living in the solitary little hut. Among these strange people, who knew nothing of her past history, she gained the reputation of a witch and fortune-teller, and many, curious to lift the veiled future, flocked to her house.

She lived to be a hundred and two years old.

During the last hours of her life, she told the tale of the buried soldiers on that sandy ridge. They who heard her thought it but a "vision" or the raving of unreason, as she described the white reaches of hills, the great pines, the dying of the men and the spring of clear water. They listened, but believed not, as she told how she gathered the glittering arms together and threw them into a bottomless bog below the slope, and collected the gold and valuables of the lads and buried them with the loved young commander. But as time passed and the old woman's story was told outside the village where she lived, her reputation as a fortune-teller added weight to the "vision," and men made search for the sandy ridge with the clear spring of water and bottomless bog. The face of the country had changed in the fifty years since "46"; but at length some one found the pine-clad hills, and from a sunny southern slope digged up white and mouldering bones and remnants of armor.

Then there were searchers innumerable. Men are living yet who tell of midnight expeditions to the spot. Mineral rods have been called to aid the search; and more rustic seekers have cut the forks of the mystic witch-hazel and followed its bendings and twistings toward heaps and hollows in the brown furze. Buckles of metal, buttons and mouldering bones have rewarded the ardent adventurers, but no golden coins have yet been shown.

There is rumor that an old man living near, who was in one day changed from a poor to a rich man, found the commander's grave and the buried gold. He was seen by many, digging over the sunny slope, and he did not deny, nor would he own, that he found the treasure. But his descendants still enjoy the fruits of the strange sudden prosperity that the old man's neighbors say came to him in no other way.

The little bog at the foot of the slope has never given up its glittering arms. It is sparsely grown now, with hackmatacks and

black spruces, but no man has ever yet been able to sound its mysterious depths.

The clear spring of water not far distant is, except to a few, unknown and unused; and ferns spread their creeping fronds over the moist surrounding stones forever wet with the ascending vapor.

The great pines have been cut away from many of the hills, and heath and wild cranberry vines grow in their stead. The Ridge is desolate; only the winds frequent it, save when leaves are sere and the pale brown lights of October are on the hills. Then a woman in a red coat and cap haunts the spot. Hither and thither, over the white ridges hurries the soldier-coated specter — out on the verdured plain to the east, across the barren moor to the west, ever on the run — not the wind over the wastes, not the spurred steed that flees at her approach, is more fleet than her light and hurrying feet. She is seeking for the marching troops, and no one willingly crosses her path.

X.

"BOY BLUE" OF GRAND PRÉ.

JANUARY 20, 1747.

The white, cold light of a winter moon shone over the icebound Basin of Cumberland. Crisp, frosty snow lay deep and level on the wide, open marshes, drifted and banked along the upland slopes, wreathed and festooned the leaf-forsaken forests of the Shepody Hills, and curled in fantastic cornice over the ragged edge of their cliffy summits.

Two months had the French Commander Ramzey, and his Canadian troops, been quartered in the little village of Beaubassin, one of the many prosperous French settlements then circling the Basin at the head of the Bay of Fundy. Since his return from the unsuccessful

attack on Port Royal, his soldiers had been in winter quarters. Early in December a report had reached him, that a large force of British volunteers from Massachusetts was to be sent to the Province, and for several weeks he anxiously waited for some word of their arrival; but none came, and a deep fall of snow now shut off all communication by land with the settlements along the shores, while the cold filled the Basin with floating icebergs, and precluded navigation. Thus garrisoned by the elements, the troops expected to remain until the warm airs of spring had loosened winter's icy hold of land and sea.

In the early part of this evening of the twentieth of January, Ramzey was alone in the house where he had taken up his quarters. He had gone to the casement for a final look upon the lonely white wastes, when a loud, sharp knocking sounded on the outer door. He quickly opened it. Two dark figures stood in the shovelled pathway through the high banked snow.

"Here is a messenger who would see you,

sire," said the foremost, with a salute to the commander as he swung wide open the heavy plank door.

"Who is he?" asked Ramzey, recognizing in the speaker the sentry from the guard house, and glancing sharply out at the large figure in the pathway beyond.

"He would not tell me, sire," answered the soldier, "but he would see you to-night, and would answer no questions of mine."

At this the commander stepped back into the room, where lights and fire-arms made safe a reception of a strange messenger. "Let him come in here," he said.

The man was on the threshold as the commander finished speaking, and passing ahead of the soldier, entered quickly the warm light room and closed the door behind him.

Ramzey glanced questioningly at him. He seemed in no haste to speak, but began removing his wrapping. The outer coat or mantle was of coarse heavy jersey, such as the peasant

French wore in winter weather. Under this was a short jerkin of thick fur, and beneath this a waistcoat of dressed skin. On his head, and pulled well down over his forehead, was a large round cap.

One after the other he pulled off these outer garments, and throwing them carelessly on the floor beside him, he stood before the commander, not the stout, strong man he had at first sight seemed, but a compactly built, sturdy youth of about nineteen, dressed in a half suit of army jeans, and with the artless, candid face of a boy of thirteen.

Ramzey's own face lighted, as with a toss of his skin cap to the floor, the lad looked up at him with a merry glance in his blue eyes. "Henri!" he exclaimed, "when did you come, and how, and why in this guise of clothes?"

"The weather is cold, sire," the young man replied, "and heavy clothing is a necessity — and there might be other reasons — but are we alone?"

Ramzey nodded a reply, went to the casement and closed it, and then seated himself near the lad.

"There are four hundred British soldiers from Massachusetts camped at Grand Pré, quartered in our people's houses, and your men could kill them all in an hour."

"Your voucher for your word, boy!" interrupted the officer quickly.

The youth's face flushed, and a reply seemed to tremble on his lips, but was not spoken; and from an inner pocket he drew a sealed paper and handed it to the commander.

Ramzey broke the seal, and hastily read and re-read the contents of the paper.

"Your pardon, lad," he said, with a proffered hand when he had finished. "But in these troublous times false words and true are alike falsely dressed, and caution is necessary when receiving words and men unguarded. Your voucher is authority, however; I know the priest's handwriting. But he tells me no more

than that your words can be relied upon, and that it is a dangerous way for a man to make alone. Where have you been since I last saw you in the autumn, and when did you see the fort at Port Royal last?"

"Six weeks and some days ago. I deserted from the fort. The three signal guns were fired when I left, and I needed to take time and caution."

"Why were you not content to remain, and what brought you here?" asked the officer.

The youth hesitated an instant, then with a straight glance at the commander, he said:

"I left because I wanted money, and when you were in Port Royal you promised me a place if I came to you — that is why I deserted. But when I got to Minas I found the British soldiers there, and our people forced to feed and shelter them. I knew the king's officer would give a reward to the man who brought him the news, and I risked the long, cold journey for the reward. Will you give it? The priest promised

me it should not be less than fifty louis-d'or — did he tell you so in the paper I gave you?"

"He told me so, and you shall have it," replied the officer. "And the king may double the reward if the British can be caught in that cage — I like the spirit of the messenger and I can make good use of you, my boy."

"I did not come to stay in your service," said the lad. "I am to be back in Minas by the tenth of next month, and I want the reward."

"You shall have it," said Ramzey, "but you cannot leave me yet. Your message means work for our soldiers. That work means a march through the woods to Minas, and you must pilot them there. Your reward will be twice doubled if you take them safely and lead them direct to the houses where the British are quartered."

"I will take the sum the priest promised, and go now," said the youth. "I must be back in Minas by the tenth of February."

"There is but one must in the case," said the

commander sternly, "and that is that you must stay here till the soldiers are ready to march, and then guide them to Minas — and till then you are a prisoner and go not out from this house. At daybreak I will call a council and in three days at the most, a start can be made. This will give you as long a time for your journey back as you used in coming, and you can be in Minas on your 'tenth day,' and a goodly escort with you." And without waiting for a reply the commander called the sentinel and gave the youth in charge, with directions to keep him under watch.

As he was led away, unresisting, except in his flushed face, the officer picked from the floor the heavy clothing, and a bright bit of blue ribbon tied in a knot fashioned only by a maiden's fingers, dropped from among it. The stern commander smiled, and tucked the blue silk in his own waistcoat pocket. Then with orders for food and fire to be provided for the lad's comfort, he closed and barred his door.

Early next morning the council was called. Ramzey had deliberated long upon the news brought by the boy, and laid his plans for the march and the attack upon the surprised soldiers at ease in the houses of the people of Grand Pré. The word soon spread among the troops, and many were the questions about the messenger who brought the news. Some of them remembered him as the young French lad from Grand Pré who had enlisted with the British at Port Royal, and who was often sent to the French camp during the informal and unmartial interviews of that autumn campaign.

All that the lad had told him of the British soldiers, Ramzey made known to his troops, and read to them the priest's letter in confirmation. There was small need of persuasion or commanding; the men were eager for the attack, and in spite of the severity of the cold and the untrodden snow and the dense forests, were all anxious to undertake the march. Of the lad's unwillingness to guide them, and his

temporary imprisonment, nothing was known by them.

After the council, Ramzey went at once to the little room where Henri had been confined, and went over and stood by him, the care and anxiety on his own face lifting at sight of the fresh, frank one of the lad for whom he had taken such a strong fancy in their interviews at Port Royal.

"Henri," he said, "in times of war, necessity makes enemies of our best friends. It is in my heart to let you do as you wish, but I must keep you and force you to lead the soldiers to Minas. For the sake of the king I serve, I must do this. He is your king as well, and you should not be unwilling to serve him. Only one hundred of the men now here were with me at Port Royal, the remainder are new troops from Quebec and are ignorant of the country. Those who were at Port Royal came here by water and know no part of the long journey that we must now make around the head of the bay. None of them

could find their way unguided over those snow-buried paths."

The youth made no answer, but stood silently in front of the commander.

"What is your need of your haste?" Ramzey asked at length, "and why do you need the money?"

"I must be there on the tenth, and I must have the money," answered the youth. "Is it full faith to deny the promised reward? Is it honor to detain the man who brings you the news at the risk of his life?"

The commander glanced quizzically at him, and drew out the bit of blue ribbon from his waistcoat pocket. The lad caught it and held it in his hand. Ramzey smiled, not banteringly, but with the look of one who had known life and love and had not forgotten; and he waited quietly for some explanation further than had been given.

For an instant, as he held the ribbon in his hand, the youth seemed about to reply, but a

restive look crept into his flushed face, and he made no answer for several minutes. At length he said:

"I came here for the money the priest promised would be given. You have no right to keep it from me or detain me; but if I stay and guide the men back, will you double the reward, as you said?"

"I will," said Ramzey.

"And you will give me the first half when I start?"

"Yes, when you start, and the other half you shall have when you have led the men to the house and the fighting is done, not until then — it will be given Coulon for you."

"I will do it," said the youth, "but I am to be in Minas on the tenth, remember that."

"Then rest at ease now," said the commander, "and keep your wits sharpened; there must be no false moves made on the march. What you remember of the way, detail to the officer I will send you," and Ramzey left the room.

That day and the next, and all through the two long nights, the preparations went on. Racquettes and moccasins had to be procured from the Indians, and wicker hand-sleighs for carrying food and accoutrements. Until they reached Cobequid, a distance of fifty miles, no fresh food could be obtained.

When all was ready for the march, the boy was released from his imprisonment, and went freely about among the men. "The lad," they called him, though not a soldier among them was taller or straighter than he. It was the round, smooth boyish face, which seemed to have lingered with all its charm on his sturdy, compact form, that gained him the nickname.

Ramzey was himself laid up with lameness and unable to attempt the journey; and the command of the expedition fell upon Coulon de Villiere, the officer next in rank.

On the twenty-third day of January they set out, three hundred strong. Their way lay first through the dense woods to Bay de Verde, from

there along the gulf to Tatamagouche, and thence to Cobequid at the head of Minas Basin.

Clear, cold weather followed them thus far. The lad had resumed the disguise in which he came to Beaubassin, and on his trim close-filled racquettes, led the way over the trackless wilderness of snow, never once mistaking the trail, or wavering in his selection of routes over and around the great hills, and through the thick swamps. Some one had caught sight of the blue ribbon as he opened his great coat on the first day of the march, and when the laugh and jest went round, the lad defiantly fastened it upon the outer coat in full view of all. "Boy Blue!" said one of the men, and by one and another this new name was taken up, and he was called by no other all of the journey.

A snowstorm, fierce and wild, came upon them as they started forth after the night's rest at Cobequid, and the travel was slow and difficult. The crust had not formed on the newly falling snow, and the racquettes sunk deep in

its crystal depths. All day and all night the cold, white depths increased, banked and barred the hills, bent upon their heads the broad branches of the great trees, and tangled about their racquette-cumbered feet the thick, low underbrush. Five pounds of beef and one loaf of bread for each man was all the provision they had for the seventy-five-mile march yet before them. The storm had delayed them a full day, and there were no provisions nearer than Pigiquit.

A look of weary anxiety came over the boyish face of their guide. The men noticed it. "Boy Blue is worn out," they said. "If the sledges were strong enough we would carry him."

But he seemed not to need rest. It was the slowness of the march that gave him the look. In the detachments sent ahead to break the way he was always the leader, and unwilling to wait the coming up of the main body.

"If we cannot cross the Chimnakadie on the ice we will lose another day in going round to

where it can be bridged," he said. The crunch of the racquettes in the snow was the only sound as the men pushed on after these portentous words of their guide.

On the morning of the thirteenth day of their march they reached the river's broad channel. But the tides of Cobequid Bay had broken the frost-bridge into great cakes, which ground and chafed against each other, and went and came with each ebb and flow. To cross it there was impossible, and they were forced to march ten miles out of their course to a place where a temporary bridge could be made. A day and a half was lost in this effort.

When they were once more on their route a change came over their guide. He seemed no longer impatient, but the weary look on the boy-face settled into a sullen, resolute expression, and he seldom spoke to the soldiers.

The night of the seventh another storm of great severity set in, and by morning the drifting snow had so changed the face of the country

that the young guide seemed bewildered as to the course. A great hill, covered with snow-laden trees and wreathed with long, irregular drifts, lay before the weary and famishing men.

"I am not certain which side of it to lead them," said the lad, and he volunteered to go alone to the top, where he could get a better view of the country and decide upon the nearest and most passable route around. The commander gave his consent, and the young man started out, climbed the steep hillside, and disappeared in the thick snow-shrouded forest.

Hours passed and he did not return. The soldiers were waiting his coming to continue their march.

"Could he have dropped from exhaustion?" they said, "he seemed made of steel."

Except that some of them remembered him in the campaign at Port Royal, no one knew more about him than that he had brought to Ramzey the news of the British soldiers; but all had taken a strong liking to him from the

start, and the blue knot of ribbon so dauntlessly worn, had found a tender spot in the breast of even the hardest.

They remembered his impatient haste to get ahead, the weary look when they were delayed, and sudden silence for the two last days, and his wonderful endurance of fatigue during the long and toilsome march.

Till noon the commander waited his return, but he came not; then a hurried council was called. It was impossible to follow the course he had taken; many of the soldiers were unused to the snow-shoes and could never climb the great wreaths along the hillside, and besides this the drifting snow had now completely covered his track. So the march was taken up to the right of the hill and continued in the direction forced upon them by the snow-barricaded hillside.

The march around was slow, and the uncertainty of the route was like clogs to the feet of the discouraged soldiers. With the loss of their

guide they lost faith in their ability to make the perilous journey to the end. Toward night their way was through a forest of great spreading hemlock that had broken the fury of the storm. Beneath their hundred tiers of green branches the snow lay undrifted and deep. Suddenly one of the foremost men called out,

"A track! a racquette track!"

"Examine its fashion," said the commander. "Boy Blue wore the Iroquois racquette; is it his?"

"It is long and slender," said the soldier, "and turned up at the toe. It may be an Indian's, and Boy Blue may have been a British decoy."

"It is the Iroquois racquette, and our guide's track, I believe; follow it!" commanded Coulon. "If he has gone ahead, he has taken the shortest road, and Pigiquit cannot be many hours' march distant."

The soldiers obeyed the order, and followed the ghostly trail. Six hours of weary tramping,

and then came signs of a settlement. Encouraged, the tired men quickened their march, and in an hour more were at the French village. The snow-shoe prints had proved a safe guide.

The remainder of the night and part of the next day they rested. The people received them gladly, provided provisions, and when the start was made again, twenty of the men accompanied the army to lead them across the mountain to Gaspereaux, and over the intervening ridge to Grand Pré, where the British soldiers, unaware of the near approach of an enemy, were living at the expense of the frugal peasants.

When they reached the Gaspereaux they were portioned out in the French houses scattered along the ridge, great fires were built to dry their wet clothing, and food provided; and there they were to remain until midnight when the final march would be made to Grand Pré.

At Pigiquit they could learn nothing of the guide who had so unexpectedly deserted them, though the prints of the racquette had led

straight to the village. The storm and fatigue of the march to Gaspereaux had left little time for further conjectures of his fate, and great was the surprise when the word was spread among them during the evening, that in one of the houses where some of the men lodged, was to be a wedding, and the bridegroom was no other than Boy Blue himself.

"It is a gay wedding," said some of the settlers, "the feast was planned, and the bridegroom picked, one of our own lads. But last night a stranger came to the house, and to-day when they gathered for the feast the bridegroom proved to be the stranger, Henri Doucet, a young lad from Grand Pré who had met and loved the girl the summer before, and who had enlisted with the British at Port Royal, hoping to earn the fifty louis-d'or the father said a son of his should show before he took his daughter. And it seems he escaped from there in early winter and found the day was set for the wedding and he had not the sum. This dared him

to go to Chignecto with the news of the British, and when he came to the house last night he had the louis-d'or to show as his right to be son-in-law."

Coulon, who held the money given him by Ramzey for the promised reward, hastened to the house, where by this time were congregated many other unbidden guests.

The little room was crowded, and there was great commotion when the commander stepped in among them and demanded an interview with the young bridegroom.

The lad himself seemed in no way confused. His merry face looked a little worn from the long exposure of the two journeys, but he met with composure the stern officer, and without waiting for question, said :

"I took Ramzey the news, and he gave me the reward. He kept me from returning when I would, and forced me to lead you back, though I told him I must be here this day. He promised to double the reward if I led you to the

British. I have not broken my faith; I led you while I could, and when I had other faith to keep I left you my footprints. I knew you could follow them to the Settlement and then easily find the rest of the way here. I am ready to go on when you go and guide you to the houses where the British are quartered; I promised Ramzey to do so, and mean to keep my promise."

"Could not the maiden have waited," asked the officer, "till your duties were over?" and he looked gravely at the girl who stood beside the youth.

"The maiden could wait," said the lad, "but her father would not, and I needed to hasten or miss the day. She can show her courage now, while I go with you to the British soldiers to earn the other half of my reward."

"There is no need for you to go," said the officer, as a murmur of protest arose from the assembled guests. "You shall have the reward; I will give it to you without further service."

The youth's bright face flushed. "I have not

earned it," he said. "I earned every centime of the other and I do not mean to beg this."

"You will join the troops in an hour then," said the commander, and he left the house.

Before the expiration of the hour Boy Blue was at headquarters, and when they set out for Grand Pré he led the way. The anxious, restless look was gone from his frank boyish face. The knot of blue ribbon still hung from his coat, and twined with it now was a bow of white.

The soldiers cheered as he joined them, cheered again as they caught sight of the white favor knotted with the faded blue. They had all heard the story, and their stout hearts responded to the power that had made the lad dare life and honor for love.

Not apprehending an attack during the winter, Col. Noble, the commander of the British forces, had raised no fortifications, but lodged his men upon the habitants. The houses and the roads were guarded, but in the darkness of

the night no sight or sound of the enemies' approach reached the sentries till the daring French troops had crept to within a few rods of the guard.

"Who goes there?" called the sentinels, as they caught the first sounds of the approaching army.

No answer was given. The cautious French crept nearer.

Again came the challenge, "Who goes there?" A flash and loud report was the answer, and the sentries dropped dead. Then the bloody butchery began.

The British soldiers, many of them in their night clothes only, rushed out into the darkness and the snow to meet the deadly storm of bullets and thrust of bayonets. The French troops were divided into ten detachments, and each detachment attacked a separate dwelling. From house to house the fighting continued; three hours in the darkness, and then the gray light of dawn from the wintry sky fell on the crim-

soned snow. Col. Noble and one hundred and forty of his soldiers lay dead, half a hundred more were wounded and as many others prisoners. A truce was called, and the deadly combat ceased.

When the French troops began to gather after their butchery was ended, Boy Blue was again missing. Some of the soldiers had seen him armed with a long sword fighting bravely hand to hand with Col. Noble in the last contest of the morning. Others had seen that officer fall from a stroke of his blade, while the bloody engagement was still in its fury.

"The maiden has won a brave husband," said the commander, "and he has more than earned his reward — he has earned the Red Ribbon to knot with his white and blue."

The men cheered.

"Where is he? We must find him," said the commander.

"I know where he is," said a soldier. "I have just left him. Come with me."

Every soldier followed, and in a little field off the road, near the stone house where the British kept their cannon and where they had made their last defense in the morning, they came upon him.

Some one had thrown down a cloak in the white drift, and he lay upon it. The blue ribbon and the white still hung from his coat, the ends of the white were shot away, and on both fragments were blotches of blood. The boy-look still clung to his face, but the blue eyes were staring up at the cold sky, and earth had no further claims or sights for him.

They were inured to scenes of war, these rough, daring soldiers, but tears came to many eyes as they turned away and left him in the white snow. In his life he had won their love, and in his death their esteem.

Next day they carried him back to the little house where the young wife waited for his coming; and the following day, after the capitulations had been agreed upon and the British

troops had retired to Port Royal, they gave him a soldier's burial. Not a man among them but stood with tear-filled eyes, as they covered the round, boyish face, so still in death, and laid away forever the lad who so well deserved a soldier's tribute of affection.

On the twenty-fifth of February, the French set out again for Beaubassin. Before leaving, Coulon gave into the young wife's hands the reward which would have been the lad's had he lived. Beside this, the officers and soldiers gave of their own money till the louis-d'or were three times doubled.

The return journey was more easily made, and in fourteen days Coulon and his men were safely back to Beaubassin — the heroes of a march of eighty leagues in the depths of winter, through a trackless forest, a march which if not well authenticated, would seem incredible to have accomplished.

All of the eight years, until the expulsion in

1755, the young wife remained in her father's house, keeping singularly true to the memory of the youth who had dared and lost his life for her love. She was among those who made their perilous flight to the woods and escaped the cruel fate of transportation.

After months of wandering and misery, these fugitives made their way to the forests about the Basin of Cumberland. There they found many of their countrymen who had escaped from the surrounding villages; and after some time they settled on a little wooded peninsula which stretched out into the blue basin. Main-a-Dieu they called it. It seemed to them veritably a hand of God reached out for their succor.

Here their descendants still live, a separate people, mingling not with the people about them, retaining their language, their customs, and their religion. And here is still told the tale of the lad who led the French troops to Grand Pré.

XI.

THE MESSENGER MAIDEN OF MINAS.

SEPTEMBER, 1744.

"Read that again, Andrew Bourge, and read it in French," said one of a group of hardy-looking, excited men gathered around a large willow-tree in the front yard of a wayside inn, in the Acadian village of Minas.

The man addressed, equipped for a journey, stood in the doorway of the inn. He was the Notary of Minas, and a man of importance in the country. Hitching the bridle of his horse to a post of the low, shed-like stoop that fronted the inn, he walked directly up to the old tree, and read, in a strong military tone of voice, the Royal Proclamation posted upon it that morning by a courier from Port Royal.

"*We do hereby promise, with the advice and consent of His Majesty's Council, a reward of One Hundred Pounds for every male Indian above the age of sixteen; for a scalp of such male Indian, Eighty Pounds; for every Indian woman or child, dead or alive, Fifty Pounds. God save the King.*"

When he had ceased reading the men talked earnestly among themselves, but no one noticed the notary, and he walked back to the inn.

As he stepped upon the stoop he was met by several young girls who had been attracted from their homes near by, to read the notice on the tree; and one of them immediately addressed him with —

"Grandsire, will our people kill the Indians for the reward?"

"Why not, daughter?" asked the notary.

"Because it is cruel, and the Indians are our friends," said the girl.

"Madrine," said the notary, with a tinge of sadness in his voice, "you are a child, and do not understand that many things are cruel which

must of necessity be done. The red rascals are themselves cruel, and not trustworthy; it was only last Saturday night that they killed several people at Port Royal."

"Grandsire," persisted the maiden, "the people they killed were English. I do not like the English, and they do not like us. They are hard masters; they rid themselves of human beings as they would of wolves. Our people had better trust to the friendship of the Indians than the English."

"Prut, daughter! you do not talk wisely," said the notary. "The English have good reason to revenge themselves on these savages, and we Acadians may as well take a hand in the hunt, when so much money is to be gained by obeying the King's proclamation. Many a house in Grand Pré and Minas will be furnished with the price of scalps before the snow flies; your own goodly built little farmhouse, Madrine, may be furnished for your wedding day much sooner than you expect by a lucky catch or

steady shot. Baptiste Doucet is a brave lad, and has the best long-range musket in the country."

The blood came to the cheeks of the maiden, and her lips curled, as she said, "It is not brave to kill women and children, and I would not go into my house nor to him, if one shilling paid for such murders helped to furnish it or went into his pocket."

Deep in his heart the old notary evidently liked the spirit evinced by his granddaughter, for he said not a word in reply to this indignant protest, but stooped and kissed the cheek that had crimsoned at mention of her lover's name, and mounting his horse was soon out of sight on the long dangerous road that led to Port Royal. Few men at that time could have made the journey in safety. But this man was both trusted and feared, and thus fortified, he rode fearlessly into the dark forest and coming night.

Madrine Bourge left her companions and

walked rapidly and alone to her home. She was mistress there. Her mother had been some years dead, and she was the only child.

It was near sunset. The weather was raw and chilly, and she built a fire of dry logs on the broad fireplace. As its mellow blaze curled round the logs and roared up the wide chimney, the ruddy light fell full upon her form and face, and the last hot words spoken at the inn repeated themselves in every lineament.

As she stood with her bare brown arms on the top of a straight-backed kitchen chair, the mellow light of the fire flushing her sharp-lined expressive face, she was beautiful, this Acadian maiden of eighteen years, but not with the beauty of culture; it was the beauty of the shapely, clean-limbed forest tree and the curving, foaming mountain stream. Hers was a wild beauty and there was reason for it. When but five years old, she had been captured by the Micmac Indians, and had lived with them till she was fifteen.

Her thoughts were now of that free life and wild people, and the crackling camp-fire she had built was a medium of communication with that past existence.

But her reverie was short, for her father soon came into the house with Baptiste Doucet, her betrothed husband. Receiving them with her accustomed greeting, she set about her household duties, and the supper was soon ready.

At the table neither of the men spoke of the proclamation on the tree. Madrine was surprised at this, and during the evening tried to get some opportunity to speak with Baptiste alone, that she might tell him of the talk with the notary. But the men seemed more than usually occupied with business affairs, and Baptiste went away much earlier than was his custom on such visits.

Madrine and her father separated for the night without a word upon the subject, but she thought long and earnestly of the cruelty to be practiced upon her people, who had been to her

like her own for so many years, and resolved to tell her feelings freely to Baptiste on the morrow.

Early in the morning she was wakened by her father, who told her he was going to Pisiquid on business that would keep him from home three days. Madrine asked no questions, for he often had business away from home. Nor was she surprised when he took from its place on the deer-horns over the door the long-barrelled French musket, and drawing out the partridge charge, loaded it with a bullet and filled the great powder horn with powder, and a leather pouch with bullets. This was the season for shooting moose and deer, and she knew there were many miles of unbroken forest on his proposed journey.

The preparations completed, Jean Bourge bade his daughter be mindful of the house and herself, and kissing her, mounted his strong horse and rode rapidly away, Madrine watching him until he passed out of sight beyond the wil-

low-trees that lined the roadway through the village.

Expecting Baptiste would be in during the forenoon, she went cheerfully about her work. Noon came, and he had not yet arrived. Alarmed at this, she inquired of the neighbors, and learned that a party of horsemen from Port Royal had gone through the village early in the morning, on their way to surprise and kill the Indians at Chignecto, and that her father and Baptiste had joined them.

It was at this settlement, and with these people she had lived the three last years of her Indian life, and the thought that they were to be killed by her own father and betrothed husband, was hard to endure. With a sad indignant heart she shut herself in the house, and sat down by the flax wheel in front of the window that faced the Basin of Minas, a broad bay into which the high tides of the Bay of Fundy flow with great rapidity.

The house was near the shore, and directly

across to the northward stood the Indian village, twenty miles distant by water, but by land a two days' journey. She sat long at the window, looking out on the blue waters of the Basin, and across it to the Indian village.

The tide was flowing majestically in over the broad flats, and creeping noiselessly up the perpendicular banks of its more rugged shores. It was three o'clock. All day the sun had shone with the brightness of summer, and over the surface of the water there rose an invisible mist, through which, in the clear, dry autumnal atmosphere, the opposite shore of the Basin and the high bluff of Blomidon appeared much nearer than they really were.

Madrine's practiced eye saw the high lands of the Indian village and the gray smoke curling up from the wigwam fires. How far away it was she did not know, but as she looked long upon it and thought of what another day would bring to its unsuspecting inhabitants, she knew it never had seemed half so near as now. A

shadow came over her face as she rose from the window, and a look of determination in her eyes.

On the margin of the shore near the house was a little sheltered cove, and under a rough shed lay a small bark canoe given her by her father, that she might be allowed to indulge in the occupation and pastime of the wild, free life of her childhood. She was an expert paddler, and was often seen on the waters of the beautiful Gaspereaux, or far out on the blue Basin.

Hastily walking to this cove, she turned over the canoe, carefully examined the seams on the bottom and sides, rubbed the whole surface of the bottom with a piece of tallow, and leaving it in that position, returned to the house. She was alone and unquestioned, and no one knew why she did this. Nor did any one know why the cows were milked and the farm stock fed and housed an hour earlier than usual. Nor why she raked the fire just at sunset, let down the white curtain to her little sleeping room,

and walked slowly to the shore where the canoe lay.

The tide was at the flood and much higher than usual. This Madrine knew to be the sign of an approaching storm, and that the ebbing of the tide would be swifter on account of it. Seizing the canoe as if it were a play boat, she launched it at once, and seating herself on the ash crossbar, paddled leisurely out on the placid water that now lapped the land far above its highest mark and lay lazily in the bed of the wide wood-embowered Basin, waiting the mysterious impulse that presently should set it flowing like a mighty river out into its ocean reservoir.

To observers from the land the canoe and its occupant were listless of purpose as the waiting water. Far out from the shore she floated, regardless of the deepening shadows falling along the high headlands and darkening the little bays and creeping slowly out over the broad water. Darker and darker, till the venturesome craft

could no longer be seen from the shore, and the mysterious impulse had been communicated to the water, slowly moving, like a great glacier, onward to the sea.

The paddle turned the bow of the canoe in the direction of the tide, and the paddler looked at the shadowy land behind, unwound from her head a silk scarf and tied it tightly about her loins, fixed her face upon the high hills of the opposite shore, laid down the paddle she had been using, and taking a broader-bladed one from its rack behind her, plied it with strong, steady strokes.

On over the tide and with the tide the lithesome bark sped like a thing of life. Two hours of unslackened speed, and the moon rose, large and red, like the morning sun. Laying down the paddle, Madrine looked at the broad highway of rosy shimmering light it threw along the water, back upon the dim outline of the land she had left, now dotted with lights from farmhouse windows, listened to the echo of the roar

of the distant surf, and felt the presage of the coming storm. Then taking the paddle she had laid aside for the larger one, she propelled the little craft over the dim water till under the shadow of Blomidon she rested again.

The moon had been shadowed by gray belts of mist near the horizon, aud now hid itself behind a heavy bank of black clouds. Darkness settled over the water. Beyond the cliff and in the channel, the distant roar of the troubled sea was preluding the coming storm. Over the bow of the canoe, in the distance, appeared white-crested billows and roaring, seething water caused by the tide from down the Basin and the tide from up the Basin, meeting, like the sides of a wedge and forming into one current that rushed out by the ragged rocks of Blomidon, foaming and eddying like a great river escaping from a cataract.

Madrine saw this raging torrent, and knew from old associations its dangerous character. But to-day she had not thought of it, and as she

now looked across its crested waves, the land she had been working so hard to gain, seemed in the darkness farther away than when she had gazed on it through the deceptive mist of the bright autumn afternoon and formed the rash purpose of reaching it in her frail canoe.

This, and the darkness and fatigue, dispirited her, and yielding to sudden despair, she sank into the bottom of the canoe and allowed it to drift with the tide.

Presently the moon rose so far above the bank of cloud as to throw its light full upon the high top of Blomidon, while the sides of the mountain, and the water, looked in contrast. Cloud-capped and misty, the bluff had towered above her and beyond her sight; and now as the silver light bathed it, making it appear to rise almost to the sky, Madrine sought to explain the mysterious phenomenon. Suddenly to her aid came the recollection that this mountain peak of Blomidon, now so flushed with strange light, was the supposed dwelling place

of the God Glooscap, the great Good Father of the Micmacs, reverenced and feared by them, and called on in times of necessity and peril.

Her despairing helplessness, the wonderful light on the sacred mountain, and the faith of her childhood united to produce the spirituality of the untaught; and springing to her feet at the risk of upsetting the tottering canoe, she loosened her long black hair, and throwing it in wild confusion over her shoulders, stretched her hands imploringly out toward the beautiful light and in language she had not used for years, cried to the Great Spirit to rescue, and send her safely across the foaming current to the land beyond.

Just then the moon rose above the cloud and threw its undiminished light full upon the water and the surrounding land; at the same time the light on the mountain-top disappeared, and seemed to fall upon the hills of the Indian village on the opposite shore.

Inspired by this omen, refreshed by the short

rest, and strengthened perhaps by faith in the efficacy of that piteous prayer she cried in wild words to an imaginary Deity, she seized again the broad-bladed paddle, an hour before relinquished for want of strength to wield, and drew it through the water with the skill of an Indian brave. The last three years of her life were forgotten — she sat in the bark canoe, with streaming hair, an Indian maiden, inspired by Indian faith; and with savage strength and cool bravery, paddled into the roaring current before her, and in an hour more was safely landed near the village of her Indian friends.

The encampment lay some quarter of a mile distant, and primeval forest intervened. Madrine knew that many paths led to it from different directions, and fearlessly entering the dense wood, instinctively threaded a right one to the little village.

Hurriedly she made her way to the tall wigwam of the chief. He had been kind to her in childhood, and his daughter had been her play-

mate. Pushing aside the dried deerskin that sheltered the doorway, she entered, and sat down on a mat at the feet of the chief. Several young braves were clustered about the fire that burned in the center of the camp. Madrine glided past them so quickly that they did not see her till she sat among them. The chief immediately recognized her, and in tokens she well knew, bade her a kindly welcome.

At once she told him of the proclamation on the tree, and of the party of men from Port Royal on their way to surprise and kill his people, and urged him to flee to some place of safety.

As she talked dark shadows came over the faces of the braves. The old chief laid down the pipe he had been smoking, and taking an arrow from the quiver behind him, placed it on the fire and watched it burn, saying to Madrine:

"You are a brave girl. You shall stay with us, and we will kill the pale-faced cowards who come to scalp women and children for money."

This terrified the girl. She had not intended to let them know that her father and lover were of the party, but now they must be told.

Pleadingly she laid her trembling hands at the feet of the chief, telling him that her father was with these men, how she loved him, and of his probable death if they had an encounter; of a brave young man who would be her husband when the next moon had hung three nights in the sky, and that he too was with the party; that they were not cowards, but brave and good; and that she could not stay with him, but must be back to her home before the morning light, that her father might never know she had warned them.

The shadow on the faces of the braves darkened into a scowl, and the chief made no sign, but looked, stern and stony, into the fire.

Alarmed at this, she spoke of the wonderful light on the top of Blomidon when all over the land and water it was dark; how she prayed to the Great Spirit Glooscap, and how the moon

came out from the black clouds and shone brightly over the water, while the light left the mountain and rested on the trees over the encampment; how her strength came back, and how the canoe had sped like an arrow over the dangerous waters.

The scowl left the faces of the braves and the stony look of the chief changed to a quiet light as he watched the arrow burn to ashes. Then rising to his feet he laid his great copper-colored hand gently on her head, and gravely said:

"Brave daughter of the pale-faced cowards, you shall go to your father and your husband. The Great Spirit wills it. And Pedovsaghtigh's braves will spare the white-faced wolves because you ask it."

Turning to the women, he bade them welcome the maiden and give her food, then he silently strode out into the night, followed by his braves.

The women of the chief's family were warm in their welcome, but Madrine was frightened

at her situation, despite the kindness shown, and she wondered where the chief had gone and what he would do.

After some time of anxious waiting he returned alone, and motioned her to accompany him. With an Indian farewell to the women, she stepped out into the dark forest and wonderingly followed the stealthy strong steps of her guide, whose eagle feathers seemed to mingle with the tops of the trees.

By a shorter trail than she had come they reached the water, but not at the cove where she had landed. Her own canoe was not there, but a large, strong one sat on the beach, with a pair of deer horns fixed to the bow, and deerskin spread in the bottom.

Madrine had seen this canoe before, and knew it belonged to the chief and was used only on great occasions. She had been told that the horns on the bow were taken from the leader of a herd of deer that appeared suddenly on the top of Blomidon at a time wher

long famine had wasted the people, and many of the deer were killed for food and the horns were sacred.

Two men stood near the canoe. They were mighty hunters and warriors, and wore eagle feathers like the chief. As she came near them each in turn laid his hand on the flowing hair and said: "You are welcome, brave child of the paleface."

Madrine did not ask for her canoe, for she knew the tiny boat could not live in the terrible storm fast gathering in the cloud-wrapped sky. The chief lifted her into the strong canoe and bade her sit low on the deerskins and keep very still. The men took their places in each end, signed to the chief, struck the strong paddles into the water, and the light craft sped over the dark surface, leaving a long line of white-fringed eddying holes behind.

On with steady speed went the canoe till the shadow of Blomidon fell upon it. Then the intrepid men drew in the paddles, lifted their

bronzed faces supplicatingly to the sacred peak and rested. Then again with the energy of engines of steel they plied the tough paddles. The rapid tide and hurrying wind were with them and the canoe rushed like a terrified thing for the distant shore, but the storm was more rapid in its speed and the dark green foam-crested billows rolled and surged on after it like angry pursuers. An hour and more of this speed and the men felt the canoe tremble and saw a broad belt of foam on either side, then bent to their work with the might of such men in a struggle for life. The ash paddles bent like wands and the storm-beset craft leaped out of the belt of foam and shot ahead of the storm. The land was almost reached when again the canoe trembled, and the belt of foam was far ahead and wide. The waves had won the race. Still the iron-nerved men drew the paddles through the seething water with unabated strength, and in the morning light soon saw the shore white with the surf of the waves that had outsped them.

The Indians knew each landing and steered for the nearest, but the curling surf-waves swamped their frail bark and flung them into the foaming tide. Madrine was rescued by the brave men and carried safely to the land. The Indians could not return until the storm was over. This the girl knew, but fearing the return of her father, dared not offer them shelter, so they carried the canoe up the shore to where the woods lined the water, and under its cover remained in safety till the outgoing tide of the next night. Entering the house Madrine found a bed of bright coals under the raked ashes, and soon had a glowing fire. Utterly exhausted she laid down on the broad wooden settee in front of the fire and slept soundly for many hours.

The evening of the next day her father returned. He did not speak to her of where he had been; but Baptiste told her of their long fruitless journey, how they found the encampment deserted and not even a fur of any value left to pay them for all their trouble.

Many were the conjectures as to how the Indians could have known of the intended attack, but no one suspected Madrine. The storm and high tides had destroyed and carried off much property, and this accounted for the loss of her canoe.

The old moon quickly wore away, and all else was forgotten in the preparations for the coming wedding. All the village was interested, each one from his own stores, according to the usual custom, giving a portion to provide the household with food for a twelvemonth. No one thought of Indians on the wedding day, and great was the surprise when the gay procession wound its way from the parish church to the new house on the hill, to see on the steps in front of the door, Madrine's old canoe, newly ornamented and filled with valuable furs and useful articles of bark and wicker-work, with only the Micmac totem on the bow to show whence it came.

Why the Indians should, at such a time, send

presents of such value, and how they could have found the missing canoe and known of the wedding, no one knew but Madrine, and she kept silent.

Years after, when peace was concluded with the Indians and the old friendly relations renewed between them and the Acadians, standing at her father's door one evening, with the blue waters of the Basin before her, her husband beside her, her father within the porch, she told it; all the years that had intervened, and the long silence she had kept, making it seem almost as much of a wonder to herself as to the two men, who for the first time knew why the encampment was empty and why the canoe and its contents had been sent as a wedding gift.

XII.

THE LIGHT ON BLACK LEDGE.

ON the Nova Scotia side of the historic Bay of Fundy, at a place now called Margaretville, a ledge of ragged rocks, projecting like a great spur from the mountain side, stretches, black and jagged and cruel, three hundred yards or more into the waters of the blue Bay. Over the ragged ledge the long and lofty billows thunder to the very verge of the basaltic columns which form the sea wall. Far up and down the coast is a wide expanse of crag-lined beach, left bare by an ebb tide of sixty feet. On one side spreads the wide water of the great Bay, on the other the densely wooded mountain with its evergreen foliage.

In the month of May, 1780, the fishermen from the valley, who had for many years used

this wild spot for a fishing station, found on the high bluff not far from the steep cliff overhanging the beach a small cabin-like house, built from the planks and timbers of wrecked vessels that had met their fate upon the jagged Ledge.

There was no other dwelling of man within many miles on this wild craggy coast, and no road leading to the settlements down the mountain or in the valley beyond.

The house was occupied and, as far as squatter's claim could make it, owned by a large strong-looking man who said his name was Peter Barnes. Not another word relating to himself would he vouchsafe in reply to the eager questioning of the suspicious fishermen. That he did not get there from landward was very certain, and that he did not come there to fish was equally certain. An old ship's boat and a pair of well-worn ash oars were some evidence that the sea had given him up at this place, but whence and how, there was no sign.

His clothes were such as the settlements

could not have supplied. Some rude farming tools and part of a fishing outfit he had, but they too were foreign. From sea and land with these implements he gathered the necessities of life, and continued the only resident of the place until the spring of '85, when the fishermen found with him a woman, about his own age, who seemed contented with the wild lonely life, and proved as silent to all inquisitiveness as the man whose rude home she shared.

The twenty-fourth of December, 1793, saw the strange couple still living in the little plank house. But this year neither sea nor land had yielded Peter the usual returns for his labor. Early frosts had killed his small crop of vegetables, and all the season the fish had failed to make their annual run along that coast.

Already there had been several weeks of hard winter weather; each day the snow had fallen deeper and the cold become more intense, and the white plain spread frozen and unbroken from the shore to the wooded mountain.

The provisions were scanty in the little plank house on the bluff. A wild storm had been blowing since early morning; the fierce wind from the Bay drifted the fast-falling snow against the hut, and the blazing drift-logs in the rough stone fireplace hardly kept the one small room comfortably warm.

At the end of the bluff there was a narrow zigzag path leading to the beach. Down this pathway late in the afternoon the man picked his dangerous way over the snow-covered rocks to the shore below the cliff. It was ebb tide, and he crept far out on Black Ledge, and searched the soaking sand and the dripping seaweed for mussels, to satisfy his hunger. But the rocks and the sand said "no!" and he climbed back up the bluff, and facing the snow-laden wind, looked out over the white-capped waves. Through the drifting mist his practiced eye caught sight of a sail. Placing himself in a favorable position for observation, he stood long and sullenly, his gaze upon the wind-swept Bay.

At last, as if with quick purpose impressed, he turned and seemed to examine with interest the long ledge of black rocks and the fury of the storm among them. Then with searching gaze he turned to a clump of tall storm-thickened firs near the seaward end of the bluff, and going near them looked again out upon the Bay, and down upon the rough rocks, then back upon his house now almost buried in the snow.

The cold wind pierced him, and the blinding snow fell thickly about him, but there in the bleakest place upon the coast he stood, unmindful of snow or cold. It was almost dark when he entered his house, pale and sullen.

"Nothing again to-day!" said the woman.

"There's a vessel out on the Bay, and out of her reckoning," he replied.

"Little good that will do us," said she.

"Perhaps she might call in," urged the man significantly.

"Why would a vessel stop here?" she asked quickly.

"It might be because she couldn't get by," said the man sullenly, as he hauled out of a chest two old ship's lanterns and commenced cleaning them.

"When I tell you, will be time enough for you to know why," he muttered, in answer to her look of astonishment, and in tones she well knew were meant to cut off all further inquiry.

Used to his strange conduct, but unaccustomed not to be participator, the woman wondered at his action, but asked no questions, and in silence the man continued his work. When it was fairly dark he lighted both the lanterns, and wrapping them in an old coat went out into the storm again, and direct to the clump of firs.

One of the lanterns showed a red light. This one he took from the wrapping, and climbing with it near to the top of the tallest tree, he fastened it securely on the outer end of a branch facing the Bay. The wind had packed the snow into the stiff foliage until the tree looked

like a white tower, and the red light gleamed from it like a beacon.

Descending, he took the other lantern to a low wall of rock near the end of the bluff and placed it in a crevice, so that its light would show in the direction he had last seen the vessel.

Thirty miles up the Bay, on the same coast, was a harbor where small vessels could get shelter in a storm. This port was marked by a red beacon-light in a white tower at the entrance of the harbor, and near it was a small house in which the light-keeper lived.

Did the red lantern in that tall snow-covered tree appear to the benighted seamen on the deck of that fated vessel like this beacon-light? Did the white lantern against the rock look like the light from the keeper's window? Did the man now picking his cautious way through the pure white snow to his warm dwelling intend they should so appear? Was there no thought in his heart of the guiding star that shed its

first rays on earth that Christmas eve so long ago, and thinking of it did his purpose waver, or his footsteps falter? O, the pity of it! Red and lambent and bright the lights gleamed from the bluff; and the surf below broke with terrible roar upon the cruel rocks of Black Ledge.

Reaching his house the man went to its only window to close the board shutter; but the wind had piled the snow thick against it and no ray of light could gleam out as a guide to shelter and warmth.

Satisfied of this, he went inside. The woman asked him no questions. "It is a wild night," she shuddered, as the wind rushed through the open doorway.

Peter Barnes made no reply, but fastened the strong plank door, raked the coals and piled on more logs, and then threw himself on his cot and was soon asleep, or seemed so to be to the woman who did not sleep.

The man's strange conduct had filled her with alarm, and the fierce storm added to her

fears and increased her suspicions. She watched the blazing fire, and listened to the howling winds and the loud roar of the waves; and not many hours passed before a crash and cries that were not of the storm broke upon her ears.

Rousing the sleeping man she unbarred the plank door. As she peered out into the fierce blinding storm the red light flamed suddenly up, and then went out. As instant as it faded she divined its reason, and needed not the further evidence of the man who roughly pushed her aside and closed the door again, but not without first glancing over at the tall fir-trees, and listening to the cries that rose above the uproar on the shore below.

To none of her entreaties would he yield, and not until morning would he rise again from his cot, or suffer her to unbar the door. But when the sun was high, he roused himself, and bidding her put on some thick clothing and follow him, he started through the drifted snow down the narrow pathway to the foot of the bluff.

What they found there need scarcely be told. The wreck was complete. Upon the Ledge was the hull of a vessel, fast breaking up, her masts and rigging among the ragged rocks, and much of the cargo on the beach. Cased in ice, and above high-water mark, were the bodies of five men; all had reached the land in safety, and perished for want of the shelter the plank house could have afforded.

The vessel's cargo consisted largely of produce and provisions, and to secure what had come ashore before the next flood tide occupied the two weary hours. Provisions were no longer scanty in the little plank house.

The next day the bodies were stripped by thawing the clothes with hot water. They were then laid within a gulch near the outer end of the Ledge, at low-water mark, and covered thick with beach-stones and sand, the slow-moving waves of the spent storm murmuring a fitting requiem.

The fate of the missing vessel was not known till spring, when a party of fishermen found on

the beach near the Ledge a portion of wreck containing the name *Saucy Nancy.*

Peter Barnes was questioned, and he stated that the vessel was driven on the Ledge in the night in a great storm, that he had tried in vain to save the crew, that the vessel had broken up during the storm and that most of her cargo was sunk at the end of the Ledge.

Official inquiry established only the fact of the shipwreck and the death of the whole crew; and Justice could do no more than fasten suspicion upon Peter Barnes.

As the years passed, settlers from the valley and fishermen from up the coast moved to the place, and a village grew up under the shadow of the wooded mountain. The place was known as Peter's Point, in recognition of its first inhabitant who still lived in the plank house.

That he profited by the terrible shipwreck the people knew, but none of the villagers entered the plank house, and neither Peter nor the woman crossed the threshold of another's door.

It was now 1813, and the day before Christmas again. For some time there had been a road over the mountain to the valley, and Peter had been for several years availing himself of this road to get supplies from the stores at the settlements, with money he certainly did not get from anything he sold or did, but always had when he wanted to buy.

The road was for the most part through an unbroken wilderness, a distance of about sixteen miles going and coming. These journeys were always commenced at a time of day that made it necessary he should return after dark. An old leather bag that looked as if made out of a knapsack served to hold his supplies, which consisted always of rum, tea and tobacco.

On this day, Peter had been to the stores in the valley, as usual, on foot and alone. Late in the afternoon he set out for home, and by dark began to climb the mountain.

It had just begun to snow in the valley, but for several hours the storm had been fierce on

the mountain and over the Bay, and when he reached the top he met a gale of wind and deep snow as trackless as a desert. But Peter was a strong man, and he pushed on, facing the fierce wind, making slow but steady progress, and by midnight began to descend to the village.

Not a light showed in any of the houses. The snow grew deeper as he neared the Bay; the storm of "'93" was repeating itself, and the wind blew furiously. Anxiously he watched for the light from his window. He did not know that, as on that other Christmas eve, there was a great bank of snow against the window, and that, too, all unknown to the woman inside the cabin. Neither did he know that an hour before one of the fishermen had gone on an errand of mercy to the house of a poor widow a few hundred yards up the shore, and, for a guide on his return, had placed a lantern in a recess of the cliff at the end of the bluff.

Suddenly in a lull of the storm the light from this lantern gleamed out. It was not in the

direction of his hut, but the air was thick with snow and he knew there was not another house on the bluff; so he gathered his exhausted strength and pushed on toward it. The wind had blown the snow so compactly that it projected over the cliff and hid the ragged rim. The whiteness beyond seemed as solid as that beneath his feet, and spread wide and far away, as thick in the air as on the ground. On he went — on — nearer — and over! With the roar of the breakers mingled a wild cry of horror and despair, and a dull heavy thud; and on the black rocks below the bluff, the icing spray of the dashing waves fell upon the body of the man who twenty years before had lured his victims by a light set in the same rocky crevice.

On the soaking sand just above the jagged Ledge the villagers found him Christmas morning, cased in ice, as he had found the bodies of his victims on that other Christmas day.

Retribution!

The woman lived but a few weeks, refusing

all companionship, and remaining in the little house. When death seemed near she told to the kind-hearted women who attended her the story of the shipwreck. Then fixing her gaze upon the blazing logs in the stone fireplace, she commenced to tell of herself, beginning with girlhood which was bright and promising; but the eyes had a far-away look, a smile came over the cold face and the lips ceased to move. The listeners bent with eager ears, but the tale was not told; with that vision the spirit fled.

It is Peter's Point no longer.

Years ago the name of the village was changed to Margaretville, in honor of the wife of Judge Haliburton, who had a summer residence there. The Black Ledge has been converted into a breakwater, and a long wharf extends to its end, where there is a light-house. Of the plank hut there is left only the site. Two of the fir-trees are still standing on the bluff, but the name of Peter Barnes is fading out of the memory of men.

CHAPTER XIII.

AN INCIDENT OF THE SIEGE OF LOUISBURG.

THE sixteenth of June, 1746! At the mouth of the harbor of the French city of Louisburg lay the English fleet; at sunset it would enter the harbor, at sunrise the next morning take possession of the city.

Forty-nine days the siege had lasted. On the first day the elegant buildings of the city were entire, the white lilies of France blossomed in the beautiful gardens, the stone walls surrounding the city on all sides were deemed impregnable, and the blue waters of the harbor were clear of any fleet save the French ships. On this last day the elegant edifices were riddled with English balls, the white lilies were crushed by English bombs, breaches were made

in the strong walls — and out at the mouth of the blue harbor swung the English fleet.

Of the thirteen hundred Frenchmen, three hundred were killed, and more than eighty lay dying in the spacious Hospital of *Saint Jean de Dieu*. While every other building in the city was mutilated, this alone remained sound.

Up and down the long corridor off which were the private apartments of the hospital, paced a lad perhaps fifteen years of age.

Not a head on the low pallets but turned with a smile as the boy entered the main ward. From the lowest underling to the presiding surgeon and Abbé, all loved and reverenced him. He was a protégé and ward of Duchambon's. On his first arrival from France, when but a child of six years, the Governor had placed him entirely under the care of Father Linipero, a learned and talented Abbé and his own trusted adviser and friend. The Abbé exerted an unlimited influence over the boy, and the boy's devotion to the priest was wonderful.

One of Father Linipero's daily duties was to visit the inmates of the hospital, and rarely a day when the boy did not accompany him. All of the Father's helpful, soothing ways he copied and far excelled; healing almost with a touch the fevered heads, and easing paroxysms with only a rubbing of his hands.

As he passed through the ward this morning of the sixteenth, he gave no heed to the smiles of welcome. Only when he turned from the ward to the corridor, did he pause. On a low temporary cot lay an old Indian, and with instant knowledge the boy saw he was dying. Placing both his small white hands on the copper-colored ones of the old man, he murmured the prayer he had heard Father Linipero repeat so often, and even while he prayed the struggle came, and he passed on.

Up and down the long corridor he paced restlessly. At the south end the door of one of the private apartments was ajar, and as he passed and repassed he could hear the murmur

of voices. At length the door was opened, and the surgeon came out.

"Is the Father ready for me?"

The surgeon turned at the sound of the voice. "Are you the messenger he spoke of?" he asked. "I supposed it was some strange lad. I would not have kept you; go in. And yet another messenger is waiting him," he added as he turned away, "a messenger I cannot waive."

The boy pushed the door open and reverently entered, then at a sign from the Father, closed it tightly.

The gray morning light was dimmed by the glare of two tall candles which, set in silver sockets, rested on the floor beside the low bed and threw their yellow light in a nimbus around the pallid face on the pillows. The head of the great black bedstead reached to the ceiling, and from it hung a canopy of dark silk which parted at the sides and swept upon the polished floor. The light of the candles shone in the

opening and lighted with a strange luster the stricken face that lay back behind the dark canopy. To the boy's reverent eyes it seemed almost a shrine, and from very awe he did not approach nearer, but threw himself prostrate upon the great crimson pillow of down which lay across the foot of the bed.

Not till the Abbé made a movement of waiting did he speak; then he said, "I have come at your bidding, Father. I would have been here before, but the Governor needed me. Do you know that this night we give up to the English, and the morrow will see us on the ocean for France? All the plans are being made, and you and I go on the same ship."

"You and I will not go on the morrow," said the priest. "For me there is a longer journey than France, and for you a sterner duty than that to the Governor. The Indians out in the Hill Settlement are dying by scores with the malady that came upon them years ago, nor can they be saved but by the medicine I saved

them with then; no one but you, or I, can gather the roots for the cure — and before the sun sets to-night I will have started on my journey."

It was part of the priest's power over the boy that he stated things directly thus. To have worked upon his sympathy by long recital of the suffering people would have been incitement soon cooled, but deep in the boy's nature was the sense of duty, and be bowed down before this straightforward proclamation of it. Not for an instant, at first, did he think of evading the task. How it was to be accomplished, and how he could be brave enough to accomplish it, were his only thoughts.

"The forests are dense, Father, outside the city walls, and the way is more than a score of miles, and strange," he said.

"There is a shorter, safer way to go," replied the priest. "Claude Ouachenoite is in the main ward — he can tell you. It was for the medicine he came, but he was shot and cannot live a day.

He will give you all directions — go to him now, and then return to me."

"He died not an hour since, as I waited your pleasure," replied the boy. And even when he spoke he knew that this would in no sense deter the duty in the Abbé's mind.

"Died?" exclaimed the Father, "dead now? and I could have taken down the directions. Your task will be even harder than I feared; but a way will be shown you. To escape from Duchambon's eye will be the hardest part. The Governor sees things not as you and I see them, and the need would not appear to him; but there *is* a need, and according as the light has been given us, we must walk, not as it has been given to others. To-night, did you say, the city is given up?"

"To-night," said the boy wearily. "To-night at six the fleet enters the harbor, and all night the packing goes on in the Governor's house. He gave me many directions — will it be right to leave my duty there?"

"Duties can never conflict," said the Abbé. "There are no duties; one overcomes the others and is paramount. Yours is to go to these Indians. They have been our friends — can we leave them now, our support, even as a nation, withdrawn, and know that only from selfishness on our part, they perish? They trust me to send or bring the cure; I cannot go, and you are the only one I can send. You are young, but have the knowledge and heart of a man.

"The West Gate, undergoing repairs when the siege began, is temporarily barricaded with lumber and stones, and during the siege breaches have been made in the walls adjoining it. Be there at twelve, when the guard changes, slip through, and then follow your senses over the thirty miles between there and the settlement. Not a beast, human or wild, shall touch a lock of your gold hair to harm you — "

The Father's voice trembled, and broke as he said these last words, and he turned away from the boy's steady gaze, for he loved him, and

rather than have him harmed, would have suffered untold tortures. As he looked upon him and thought of all the dangers that might assail him, he hesitated, and his heart cried out, "Not this child! he will meet hardness soon enough; do not thrust it upon him, let him live his happy boy life!" But no, the task must be done; and when he spoke again there was a pitiless ring in his voice.

"Forty days the sun has shone clear and bright, a deluge of sunshine uninterrupted by cannon shots or shrieks of death, but when it goes down to-night, the rain will fall and the night will be black and thick. You can readily escape through the ruined streets to the West Gate. I have written down for you the description of the plants whose roots you require, and on your way you will gather as many of these as you can carry. I have also written directions for preparing the remedy; given freely it is potent as death, given sparingly it cheats death. The single yellow flower I showed you last year

when we were gathering bulbs you will seek for carefully. It is a variety of the Tormentilla and you could easily mistake another for it, but I trust you."

As he spoke he drew a sealed paper from his pillow, and reaching over put it in the boy's hand, which lay palm upward on the crimson cushion. The small white fingers were for a moment passive, then closed tightly over it.

"I cannot tell you how you will get back to France, or when, or if ever; but that need not hinder you. You will not try to leave while these small hands can minister to their needs; they have a power you wot not of, and the power was given you to use. Will you go?"

Slowly the boy lifted his head forward and rose to his feet, his face rigid with determination. So worked upon had he been by the priest's plans, so wrapped in his directions, that no thought, for the time, of friends, of France, or even of the dying Abbé entered his mind to dispossess this other motive. That the Abbé

wished him to go he knew, that he must go he never once doubted, and with not a trace of boyish weakness or indecision he said, "I will," bent for a moment and kissed the trembling hand outside the coverlet, then went from the room.

With firm step he walked down the corridor, lifted his cloak from a stand, and wrapped it about his shoulders and stepped out into the bright sunlight.

Then came the revulsion, and the weakness. The ruined streets, the moans of the wounded borne into the hospital, the curses of the soldiers — all lost for a while in the hush of that dim chamber with the dying priest — broke the spell, and bursting back into the room again he threw himself down with bitter crying, on the floor beside the bed.

"What makes you ask me?" he cried. "I cannot do it. And you, O, Father! how can I bear to think of you dying and leaving me — I forgot it, forgot everything, and I thought I

could do it, but I cannot. I would rather die here with you. It is so far there, and so wild, and I may never get back to France — what makes you ask me? it is too hard; it is so hard, and I am only a boy!"

"Only a boy," ah, yes! the Father knew it. With a dying strength he leaned forward and drew the boy's gold locks and white face close to his own, and for many minutes there was no word spoken. Close around the Abbé's neck the boy twined his arms, and they lay there together, together as they would never be again, together struggling, the boy with his weakness, the man with death; and for a while the two held communion that no words could interpret — the gray-haired man, all but through with the battles of life, the boy just beginning them.

At length the Abbé spoke. "Leon," he said, "you are only a boy, but it is not men alone who do brave deeds; it is the spirit and not the age. And if the journey be wild and rough and never perhaps leads to France — what matter?

Your feet, before you live to be my age, will have to tread many wilder, rougher ways. I am near the end of mine; not ever to France can I go — and God will you may never love France as I do and be kept from France as I have been. I meant always, to tell you — but now it is too late. If as hard things are for you as were meted out to me I have no fear you will shirk.

"Before the ships sail on the morrow, while yet this is a French city, I will be through my journey; and yours will be but begun. I will be buried under the great hemlock-tree on the hillside, where we have rested so often; the surgeon has promised me that. *And once, some time, I want you to come and lie down beside me.* I shall know it. Now go, the hours are passing and there is much for you to think of and do. No fears this time, no tears; think not of France, but only of the Right."

Again the boy rose to his feet and bent and kissed the trembling hands of the Abbé.

Neither spoke a word of farewell; that had been done in the long, silent embrace, and again he turned from the room and went out of the great doors of the hospital.

This time the noises of the street did not disturb him. He passed slowly along, as was necessary among the débris that blocked the way. Groups of men stood congregated on safe corners, in their hearts and upon their faces even now the shadow of the great home-sickness that would assail them with such terrible force, when with the morrow's sundown the transport-ships would drop down the harbor, out of sight of the islands and hills and familiar shores of what to many was their native land, and leaving behind them forever their dead, and their city in ruins.

As the straight cloaked figure of the boy passed these groups scores of hats were doffed, for scarcely a man in the city but knew by sight if not personally, the handsome ward of the Governor, who walked about so much with the

Abbé. Seeing but the one figure now, many a pitying thought came into their hearts for the lonely lad, for all knew that the kind priest lay dying in the hospital. How little they guessed what a deeper loneliness would come to him, how little they knew of the struggle in his heart!

With no show of it in his face he walked on and struck the Parade. The great square was deserted and desolate, and he quickly crossed it and entered the garrison chapel. There, wild with excitement, people of all classes had thronged, the rich and the poor crowded indiscriminately in the pews and aisles, all bowed with the common anguish of leaving their homes and losing their dear ones.

Close beside the door knelt a woman rich in laces and silk, who had lost husband and son during the siege. Throwing her arms up and covering her face with her hands she moaned in agony of prayer, "Ah, Blessed Mother, make me strong, make me strong!"

"Ah, yes, make me strong," the boy echoed as he knelt beside her, "make me strong!" But only his heart echoed it; no word escaped his rigid lips, and he rose from his knees and passed out of the chapel. Reaching the outer door he paused; he could distinctly hear a hoarse roaring like distant thunder, and knew the storm the priest had prophesied was at hand. Already it was sending its prelude through the air and over the waters of the tempestuous Atlantic.

To the left was the placid harbor, at its mouth the British fleet, and beyond the fleet the heavy bank of fog that the southwest wind blowing from the strait and Cape North kept always there.

To the right, beyond and over the walls sloped the spacious marsh, covered now with myriads of golden-cupped lilies. And beyond the marsh, landward, beyond the West Gate, straight out from the gabled roofs of the hospital lay the low hills and black woods. Through them and alone the boy must pass.

He stood still, with both hands shading his eyes, looking out over the broad waters for many minutes. Out by the rocky islet lay the ships that would have taken him on the morrow, but instead he would be — where? The great stretch of black woods beyond the marsh was his only answer.

For the last time, doubtless, all these sights! With a weak, struggling heart Leon turned away and crossed to the north side of the square where the Governor's mansion was; he entered quietly and went up to his own apartment. The house was crowded with people, and Duchambon himself occupied with a delegation of the elders of the city. No one gave particular thought to the boy, and any who might, supposed him with the dying Abbé.

Shutting himself in, he fastened the door and lay wearily down across the foot of the bed. The sunset vanished almost as soon as it glowed. Then the storm began; the rain came down in sheets and the wind blew fiercely with it.

Two hours and more he lay there. No thought of evading the task entered his mind; to do it was compulsory — that it was so hard to do caused the struggle.

A sound of guns broke the stillness of the room and told him that it wanted but an hour of twelve; at twelve the guard at the West Gate would change.

He opened the window and stood for a moment on the sill. Far off in the harbor and toward the King's Bastion was a confused noise of voices and guns, but out in the direction of the West Gate all was quiet. The window opened on a piazza, and from this to the terraced garden was an easy leap.

Not a sound did his lithe footfalls make as he crossed the Parade and stole past the sentry-post and out into the street which led direct to the hospital. There the lights from the many windows broke the black gloom of the night and threw in full sight the street in front, so turning in another direction he went by a longer route

up over the Covert Ways and direct to the side of the West Gate. He did not reach it a moment too soon. Scarcely had he shielded himself behind the stone loosely piled there during the siege when a group of soldiers marched up the street singing and talking loudly. They as well as the guard at the gate had been drinking freely of the liquor which had been placed in the general storehouse. Orders were given for it to be strictly guarded, but in the confusion of the last hours all orders had been broken, and whole hogsheads were emptied and distributed among the soldiers in different parts of the city. When the group drew near they roused the drunken guard and all went into the shed in front of the gate where the liquor had been secreted.

With a single leap the boy stepped from behind the stone and pushed through the nearest breach, passing so close to the soldiers that the end of his cloak brushed against one of them. The soldier started and grasped his

musket, but seeing nothing and hearing only the laughter of his comrades, passed on to the shed; giving time to the boy to walk swiftly out of sound before the new guard came on duty. Another moment and escape would have been hopeless; trained to instant decision by the Abbé he used the moment given him.

For an hour his way lay over the low hills that skirted the back of the walls. The rain, fierce enough in the more sheltered city, beat furiously down in the open country, and when he reached the great wood he was drenched to the skin.

This much of the journey he knew well, and knew that not forty yards within the wood was a wigwam used by the Indians when going back and forth from the city. He and the Abbé had often rested there. With little difficulty he found it and lay down, utterly exhausted. All the rest of the night he lay there, awake and alone, on the verge of the dark forest; the giant trees rocking and reeling in the furious

gusts, and the rain falling like bullets on the birch-bark shelter.

Soon as the morning dawned, he started again, and all day with no depression, no sorrow on his face, pursued his way like a man going about some business he had long expected to perform. In the open places of the forest and on the shores of the lakes he searched for the roots the Abbé had specified. Often the way was rough and untrodden, sometimes the woods so dense and dark that his eyes could penetrate no farther than each step took him.

Once, a great sheet of water in the midst of the wood forced him to turn back and retrace miles of his journey, only to again emerge on the edge of the same lake. Again he wound his way back, and this time struck the very trail the Indian runner had taken on his fatal errand to Louisburg. The way was worn and easily followed and led direct to the encampment, so that when nightfall came he was within a mile of the Hill Settlement.

LEON ARRIVES IN THE PLAGUE-STRICKEN VILLAGE.

Only a few words of Micmac tongue he knew, but much of the Algonquin, for the Abbé, with a strange love for mastering all that touched him, had possessed himself of this language; and a knowledge of Algonquin among the Indian tribes of that time was what French is among European nations of to-day, so the boy knew that he could converse readily with the chief and elder braves.

The sun was sinking when he entered the plague-stricken village. The wigwams were ranged in a semicircle inside the picketed inclosure. Lying on the ground before some of them and across the thresholds of many, were the dying Indians, men, women and children; squatted in frightened groups were others, and from some of the wigwams came the sound of wailing and chanting.

As the fair-haired boy entered the open part of the inclosure, he could be distinctly seen from all the tents. Under his arms were great bundles of red and black roots, in his hands

bunches of the flowering Tormentilla; his cloak fell back from his shoulders, his golden curls were damp and tossed by the wind and rain, and his face intense and eager with sympathy.

Some slunk back with fears at his approach, others clustered about him, while yet others ran to the chief to acquaint him of the stranger in their midst. It took but few words to tell the chief of the death of the Indian runner, and why he had been sent in his stead and instead of the Abbé.

Weeks he remained, healing many with almost miraculous power, and staying the ravage of the plague. Carefully he taught the Indians to themselves recognize and clean the roots, and went with parties to gather and dry the Tormentilla against a further need; and when the maize grew golden and full, every trace of the plague had left.

Not while he could minister to the people had he allowed himself to think of France; the need over, the mission accomplished, his heart

yearned for friends and civilized life. With characteristic silence the Indians had never questioned him of his departure. They accepted his tarrying as they had accepted his coming, and when the boy spoke to them of his desire to return to France, they readily told him of the yearly visit the Micmacs of Isle Royale made every hunting moon to pay tribute to the Algonquins on the Ottawa River, and when he begged to be allowed to accompany them on their voyage, they sought in no way to deter him.

Remembering the dying wish of the Abbé he urged one of the braves to go back with him over the perilous journey of that stormy night and help him seek out the grave of his loved friend. But the English still held the ruined city, and knowing that they were regarded by them as the allies of the French, the Indians had wholesome fears of being seen and refused to go; they promised to find the grave at some later time and carefully tend it.

When the full ears were gathered, the furs dried and dressed, and the canoes newly ornamented, the braves of the Micmacs started on their journey. At dawn of day they set out from the encampment. Silently the chief and the women and children followed them to the water's edge to bid farewell to the fair-haired Wenuch whom they had reverenced as though he were a *Sasus* sent from God. Almost as sorrowfully the boy bade adieu to them, promising that sometime if he lived he would return.

Up the little river they sped, across the portage to the chain of lakes and out into the next river to its mouth — then the blue waters of the Atlantic! Close by the shore they paddled, up through the narrow precipitous strait between Isle Royale and the peninsula, and up into the longer strait between that and Isle Jean. Then Fort Beau Sejeur came to view, and there they stopped for supplies of food and another detachment of Indians to join them on their long journey to "the people at the end of the water."

There too was De Luttre, the missionary priest from Quebec. To him the boy went for information; and when the canoes started again on their journey he remained behind, persuaded by De Luttre to go with him by sloop direct to Quebec, and from there by vessel to France.

When the next moon the braves returned they had no answer to the eager inquiries for "the Wenuch," except that he had remained with De Luttre and given them promise again that sometime when the marsh was golden with lilies he would return.

Every year after this some of the Indians journeyed out to camp on a slope of the low hills just outside the city's walls, not a rod from the simple iron cross that marked the grave of the Abbé; camped and waited till the lilies faded. The chief, the elders of the tribe, were laid under the tumulus of their fathers. Dying, the elders told the tale to the young men, and in no year was the watch unkept.

Fifty summers the lilies grew yellow on the

Louisburg Marsh, fifty summers the dusky watchers camped under the shadow of the low hills.

Twice that fiftieth year the waiting braves started on their homeward trail, twice by some strange influence returned and prolonged the watch. The lilies budded and blossomed and turned from all their gold to brown and faded quite; then, over the surface of the marsh shone the blossoms of the bake-apple; the blossoms had turned to their tinted fruit, when one evening as the sun set over the water and fired the bank of fog that walled the sea, a canoe shot from out the glory over the blue waves of the ocean and into the smooth desolate waters of the harbor.

When it touched the shore below the ruined city the dusky men were already there, and they lifted out with loving care the man who lay on the blancoating. Fifty years they had waited his coming, fifty years he had waited to come. All the honors heaped upon him in the fifty

years these simple people did not know, and he did not speak of them. When they saw him pallid and weak, and he told them that a malady had come upon him that he could not cure, they did not know that if his skill availed not then surely no other would.

Tenderly, reverently, they helped his weary body up over the ruined walls of the city; and out on the slope where the iron cross stood; then they left him, and till all the light faded he lay there.

When night came they had constructed a rude litter, and carefully they carried him, by easy stages to the wigwam at the edge of the wood. There they rested till dawn; and before another morning were at the Indian village.

Not a score of those who remembered him were living, but these remembered him well. Quietly, contentedly he tarried with them; told them of his long adventures in getting back to France, of his meeting with Duchambon who had supposed him dead; and of his life since.

He saved many who were sick, taught them much knowledge of roots and herbs, and prepared for them cures which to this day they preserve and use; and before the lilies were blown again passed away from them forever.

Close beside the Abbé they laid him, under the great hemlock-tree; wrapped him in costly furs, chanted their funeral wails, watched three days and nights by the grave, then went their way and left the two together.

The dark hemlock tosses its plumes over them, the Atlantic surges and moans afar, and under the simple iron cross they rest. One, an exiled son of one of France's noblest families, the other a physician of such renown that France would have honored him as a prince in his burial.